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METHUEN'S ENGLISH CLASSICS

SELECTIONS FROM
THOMAS LOVE
PEACOCK

Edited by

H. F. B. BRETT-SMITH, M.A.

Reader in English Literature in the University of Oxford



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PREFATORY NOTE

IN the following selections from Peacock's works, the authentic text has been carefully preserved, but a number of the original footnotes have been omitted

Two or three of the serious poems at the end of the present volume were first printed in Messrs Bentley's three-volume edition of Peacock's *Works*, published in 1875. I am indebted to Messrs. Macmillan (the purchasers of Messrs. Bentley's business) for their courtesy in offering no objection to the inclusion of these poems. To my friend Mr. C. E. Jones, who was kind enough to read the Introduction before it went to press, I owe the correction of a couple of slips

H. F. B. B-S.

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INTRODUCTION

THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK was born at Weymouth on October 18, 1785. He was the only child of Samuel Peacock, a London glass merchant, and of Sarah Love, daughter of Thomas Love, a master in the Royal Navy, who had left the service after losing a leg in one of Lord Rodney's victories over the French. Peacock was still a child when his father died, and most of his early years were spent with his mother at Thomas Love's cottage, Gogmoor Hall, in Chertsey. Sarah Peacock was a woman of character and ability, with a taste for good literature which she communicated to her son, and during his six and a half years at a private school in the neighbourhood he was already writing verses on various subjects. He left school for good, however, before the age of thirteen, and in February 1800, when he won a prize offered by *The Monthly Preceptor* with some couplets on the question "Is History or Biography the more improving Study?", he was a clerk in a city firm. The employment was probably uncongenial and certainly short, Peacock had acquired a love of learning even in his school days, and during the years usually devoted to a public school and a university he was allowed to complete his education in his own way, by living at home and reading as he thought fit in the British Museum. "I was early impressed," he told a correspondent in later life, "with the words of Harris. 'To be competently skilled in ancient learning is by no means a work of such insuperable pains. The very progress itself is attended with delight, and resembles a journey through some pleasant country, where every mile we advance, new charms arise. It is certainly as easy to be a scholar as a gamester, or many other characters equally illiberal and low. The same application, the same quantity of habit, will fit us for one as completely as for the other.' Thus encouraged,

¹ The author of *Hermes*

I took to reading the best books, illustrated by the best critics" This course of study, which he pursued throughout his life whenever leisure permitted, turned him into a good classical scholar, with a competent knowledge of some of the best French and Italian authors in the original, a fairly extensive acquaintance with the English poets and dramatists, and a general contempt for the seats of learning at which he had not studied—or, as he would have claimed, been prevented from studying.¹

In 1806 appeared his first published volume, *Palmyra, and other Poems*, and in the summer of the following year he was engaged for some months to a beautiful girl of eighteen, Fanny Falkner, who lived with her mother near Chertsey, then a small country town. The engagement "was broken off in an unjustifiable manner by the underhand interference of a third person",² and the lady, thinking herself deserted, married another man, and died in 1808. Peacock lived to experience a happy marriage and a ripe old age, but he never forgot this tragic episode, which is commemorated in some of the best of his serious poems, the stanzas beginning "I dug, beneath the cypress shade," the verses *Al mo Primo Amore*, and the lines on Newark Abbey, which had been the lovers' meeting-place.³

Disturbed by his loss, Peacock obtained in the autumn of 1808, through his uncles' influence, the post of under-secretary to Sir Home Popham on H M S. *Venerable*, but he found the flagship no better than a "floating Inferno," and left her for good in the following March. During the summer he explored, on foot, the valley of the Thames from its source to Chertsey, and his poem *The Genius of the Thames* was published in 1810. Throughout a long life Peacock spent much of his leisure in the open air, walking or boating, and his poems and novels are distinguished almost as much by the enjoyment of natural scenery as by the knowledge of literature, which he acquired mainly in the winter and during unfavourable weather. He had made a walking tour in

¹ See page 38.

² *Biographical Notice*, by Peacock's granddaughter.

³ See pages 199-201.

Scotland in 1806, and in January 1810 he paid his first visit to North Wales, living in rooms at Maentwrog in Merionethshire, exploring the mountain glens, and making the acquaintance of the vicar, Dr Gryffydd, "a little dumpy, drunken, mountain-goat," and his daughter Jane. This "Caernarvonshire nymph," who had some knowledge of the classics, made a deep impression on him, but he was able to write to a friend, in June, "It is now a month since I saw her, and 'Richard is himself again'." In the following April he presented her with his last remaining copy of *The Genius of the Thames*, and said goodbye, he was convinced that she was "the most innocent, the most amiable, the most beautiful girl in existence," but he was in no position to maintain a wife, and years were to pass before they met again. His poem *The Philosophy of Melancholy*, which appeared in 1812, owed its best passages to the author's memories of Merionethshire and of Jane Gryffydd, and a smaller volume of 1812, *The Genius of the Thames Palmyra and other Poems*, contained revised versions of the more important of his previously published pieces.

It was towards the close of this year that Peacock, who was just twenty-seven, first met Shelley, who was almost seven years his junior. Both in person and in mind, the elder poet was likely to hold the attention of the younger, he was "a fine, tall, handsome man, with a profusion of bright brown hair, eyes of fine dark blue, massive brow, and regular features, a handsome mouth which, when he laughed, . . . turned up at the corners, and a complexion, fair as a girl's, his hair was peculiar in its wild luxuriant growth, it seemed to grow all from the top of his head, had no parting, but hung about in thick locks with a rich wave all through it."¹ He was also an acknowledged poet with several volumes to his credit, a good classical scholar, and a well-read man of letters, and he possessed two invaluable gifts which Shelley conspicuously lacked, a sense of humour, and a discerning knowledge of the world. Throughout the remainder of Shelley's troubled life, during his matrimonial and financial difficulties in England, his travels

¹ *Biographical Notice*

in Switzerland, and his last years in Italy, Peacock acted as his adviser or representative, making the common-sense suggestions which the younger poet usually needed and occasionally took. When Shelley's vegetarian principles reduced him to nervous misery, Peacock's prescription of "Three mutton chops, well peppered" was successful at once, when Shelley imagined himself a victim of elephantiasis, and "often startled young ladies in an evening party" by suddenly pinching them to see whether they were afflicted with this malady, it was Peacock who comforted him with a quotation from Lucretius to the effect that the disease was found nowhere outside Egypt, when Harriet Shelley committed suicide, it was on Peacock's advice that Shelley was legally married to Mary Godwin, and finally, when Shelley was drowned in Italy in 1822, it was Peacock who undertook the necessary negotiations with Sir Timothy Shelley on behalf of the widow and heir. His *Memoirs of Shelley*, published thirty-six years later, are among the few sane and impartial accounts of the poet's life and character, his portrait of Scythrop in *Nightmare Abbey* is a brilliant exaggeration of the youthful and romantic Shelley of 1812-17,¹ and his light and witty attack on poetry, published by Ollier in 1820, was the direct cause of Shelley's famous and serious *Defence*.

It is, however, as a novelist that Peacock is best known, and the first of his seven novels, *Headlong Hall*, was published at the end of 1815.² It shows already his favourite device of collecting a number of cranks—or at any rate, persons of unusual and strongly marked tastes and opinions—in the congenial society of a hospitable country house, where they can exhibit their foibles in an atmosphere of cheerful conviviality. Contemporary poets, novelists, and reviewers, contemporary crazes for phrenology and landscape gardening, are satirized along with the more enduring features of

¹ Shelley wrote to him from Livorno, in June, 1819. "I think Scythrop a character admirably conceived and executed. The catastrophe is excellent. I suppose the moral is contained in what Falstaff says—"For God's sake, talk like a man of this world", and yet, looking deeper into it, is not the misdirected enthusiasm of Scythrop what J. C. calls the "salt of the earth"?"

² The title page is dated 1816

humanity, and Squire Headlong's irresponsible good-fellowship, and the farcical events of the plot, give ease and liveliness to the whole

Melincourt, which followed in 1817, is a longer and more ambitious work, and is indeed the only one of Peacock's novels which the modern reader is apt to find dull. The reason is that too much time and satire is spent upon matters of ephemeral interest, which overburden the plot and leave little room for the exercise of the author's best qualities, genialty, wit, and a gift for clever rapid dialogue and farcical situation. The conversations in *Melincourt* are altogether too long and prosy, in spite of the original idea of presenting an orang-outang (Sir Oran Haut-ton) as the hero, and providing him, though dumb, with a baronetcy and a seat in parliament. Sir Oran certainly shows himself in a much more estimable light than many of the human personages of the novel, and his election as representative of a rotten borough gives scope for some excellent political satire, but the treatment of the story is a little cumbersome and tedious.

No such objection can be urged against *Nightmare Abbey*, which appeared in 1819, the intervening year having seen the publication of Peacock's most ambitious narrative poem, *Rhododaphne*. Besides the character of Scythrop, and the delightful sketch of Byronic melancholy in Mr Cypress, there is a general attractiveness about the personages of this novel, and even Mr. Listless is capable of mental agility. The heroines, Marionetta and Celinda, who have some general resemblance (it would be absurd to claim a closer likeness) to Harriet Shelley and Mary Godwin, are lively sketches of their respective types, and the handling of the whole house party is delightfully witty and inconsequent.

In the autumn of 1818 Peacock was actively engaged in writing *Maid Marian*, and had finished all but the last three chapters when the novel was laid aside for more urgent business. He was still a mere literary free-lance with no regular work or income, though he was now thirty-three years of age, when the opportunity of a permanent post at the India House presented itself; and after a period of probation, his appointment

as one of four new Assistants to the Examiner of the East India Correspondence was confirmed in April 1821. The salary was £800, but the duties at first were not too onerous, for in those leisurely days the Indian mail arrived only twice a year, and Peacock had enough spare time for writing, and enough spare income for matrimony. On November 20, 1819, he posted a characteristic proposal of marriage to Jane Gryffydd, who had not seen him for more than eight years, the answer, though discreetly non-committal, was not discouraging, and by the following spring they were man and wife. Their eldest daughter lived to marry George Meredith, whose *Poems* of 1851 were dedicated to his father-in-law, but the second child, Margaret, died before she was three, and was commemorated by the beautiful verses which Peacock wrote for her tombstone in Shepperton churchyard. Margaret's place was filled by a son and a third daughter, but her mother never recovered from the blow of her death, and became a confirmed invalid some years later.

Peacock has left a brief but vivid account of the official day at the India House, where those of the permanent staff who arrived before ten o'clock were given a free breakfast by the Company.

From ten to eleven, ate a breakfast for seven
 From eleven to noon, to begin 'twas too soon,
 From twelve to one, asked, 'What's to be done?'
 From one to two, found nothing to do,
 From two to three began to foresee
 That from three to four would be a damned bore

This need not be taken too seriously, but he found time to publish *The Four Ages of Poetry* in 1820, and to complete *Maid Marian* by 1822. *The Four Ages* is a lively attack on poetry as an outworn relic of barbarism, but its true aim—apart from the joy of maintaining a paradox—was to ridicule Peacock's contemporaries, the Lake Poets, as the representatives of the poetic Age of Brass. The essay is full of epigrams and high spirits, and it gains real importance from Shelley's *Defence*.

Maid Marian was described by its author as a comic romance of the twelfth century, it makes no pretence

to historical dignity, but the Robin Hood legends gave Peacock scope for a good deal that was congenial to him—witty repartee, a charming heroine; the free life of the forest, plenty of good eating and drinking and singing, some satire on wealth and the Church and modern times, much knock-about cudgel play without serious consequences, and above all the Rabelaisian Friar Michael, whose songs and high spirits are alike unfailing. The whole piece goes with a swing, and it is not surprising that when J. R. Planché promptly turned it into a libretto, his light opera, *Maid Marian, or, The Huntress of Arlingford*, was a great success at Covent Garden in the December of 1822.

The Misfortunes of Elphin, another comic romance, based on the Welsh legends of Taliesin, did not appear till 1829, and is naturally less lyrical and exuberant in style, but it has gained in maturity, and *The War-Song of Dinas Vawr* is perhaps the finest of Peacock's comic lyrics, as Prince Seithenyn is of his comic characters. The diction of each has a pith and brevity that adds much to the wit, there is no mistaking the accents of Seithenyn, once they have been heard, and though his immortal defence of the decay of the embankment happens to be also a skit on Canning's antagonism to parliamentary reform, its arguments are entirely in keeping with the character and habits of the speaker.

After the publication of *Elphin*, Peacock began to occupy some of his leisure in writing reviews and articles for the more important periodicals of the day, these papers deal with many subjects, and hardly come within the scope of the present volume, but a paragraph from the account of London Bridge¹ may be quoted here as evidence of the characteristic flavour of their satire:

The old London Bridge was begun in 1176, and finished in 1209. It was built on such unscientific principles, that it ought to have been carried away before it was finished, when it was finished, and at any given time subsequently, but partly by the awkward contrivances of barbarous men, partly by its own obstinacy, it has stood six centuries and a

¹ *The Westminster Review*, October 1830.

quarter, amidst the perpetual prophecies of disinterested engineers that it could not stand any longer while one bridge after another, on different parts of the same river, in which no son of science had espied a flaw, has wilfully tumbled to pieces, by the sinking of the piers, or the yielding of the abutments, in despite of the most mathematical demonstrations of the absurdity and impropriety of such a proceeding

Elphin was followed in 1831 by *Crotchets Castle*, a return to the earlier type of novel based upon the conversation of a modern house party, and buttressed (as the title admits) with crotchets of various kinds. It possesses, in the Reverend Doctor Follitt, one of the best of Peacock's parsons, "a gentleman endowed with a tolerable stock of learning, an interminable swallow, and an indefatigable pair of lungs," who can put down with equal success a bottle of Madeira or a couple of footpads, but it has also the pair of pleasant heroines, the vignettes of romantic scenery, and the continual strokes of satire on modern opinions and affairs, which a reader of Peacock's novels may reasonably expect. It marks, however, the close of the middle period of his authorship, for in 1833 Sarah Peacock died. For the last six years she had relieved her invalid daughter-in-law of the cares of housekeeping and a family, these now devolved upon Peacock himself, and occupied most of the time which was not required by his official duties. Moreover, he had always "read all his writings to her, consulting her judgement, and seeking her criticisms, he often said that, after his mother's death, he wrote with no interest, as his heart was not in the work."¹ The India House, also, claimed more attention as he rose to positions of greater responsibility,² and it was largely through his advocacy that the Directors acquired a fleet of iron steam-ships in place of the wooden sailing vessels which had previously carried their mails. These ships, which he called his "iron chickens", were the most spectacular result of his service, but he had long been a valued official and adviser of the company when he was succeeded in the Examinership by John Stuart

¹ *Biographical Notice*

² He became Assistant-Examiner in 1836, and Examiner on the death of James Mill in the same year

Mill in March 1856, retiring with a pension of £1,333 6s 8d¹

During the quarter of a century that had passed since the publication of *Crotchet Castle*, Peacock had printed a few scattered appreciations, reviews, and pieces of light verse, but now on his release from official duties he entered upon a final period of literary activity. Half a dozen articles, including the three parts of his *Memoirs of Shelley*, appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* in 1858 and 1860, and the latter year saw the publication, in the same periodical, of *Newark Abbey*, and of his last novel, *Gryll Grange*, which came out as a serial from April to December. It is an astonishingly vigorous piece of work for a man in his seventy-fifth year, and shows that neither intellect nor prejudices had lost their edge, but the opposition to other people's opinions, though still decided enough, is less pugnacious than of old, and Peacock's love of gastronomy and the classics seems to have exercised a mellowing influence with the lapse of time. Doctor Opimian, the latest of his parsons, is perhaps also the best, and certainly shares the four chief tastes of his author, "a good library, a good dinner, a pleasant garden, and rural walks". It is a kindly world, in which an overheard Greek quotation is warrant enough for an invitation to dine, and the seven sisters of the Folly are neatly provided with as many eligible bridegrooms so that they may be married on the same day as their betters.

In 1862 Peacock added a brief *Supplementary Notice* to his *Memoirs of Shelley*, and published a translation of *Gl' Ingannati*, an Italian sixteenth century comedy which is counted among the sources of *Twelfth Night*; but his latest years were spent in more and more complete retirement in the library of his house at Lower Halliford, or in its pleasant garden sloping down to the Thames. Here he would entertain the village children on May Day, giving a bright penny to every child, and watching the dances that followed the crowning of the Queen of the May; and in this house, in the eighty-first year of his age, he died on the twenty-third of January 1866.

¹ His salary had been £2,000

To summarize his qualities, and the value of his work, is not easy, for his writing is a curious blend of the high spirits of perfect physical health, the little pedantries of a self-taught scholar, the gusto of an epicure, the love of romantic scenery common to the generation of Wordsworth and Scott, and a distaste for that generation's romantic excesses as shown in the Lake Poets. Everything is seen with the eye of a satirical, able and conservative man of the world, who is apt to exalt old authors and old customs, and to distrust the modern "march of mind" and the effects of science and popular education upon our

' steam-nursed, steam-borne, steam-killed,
And gas-enlightened race '

The novels are intellectual, based upon books and opinions, the characters are types, or mere mouth-pieces to represent those opinions, and we may look in vain for character-development as Shakespeare or Fielding shows it, and yet there is the joy of earth to keep the writer's feet upon firm ground, and the knowledge of men and affairs to make his prose epigrams as entertaining as *Hudibras* (in which he delighted) for practical men. Moreover he is a poet, who can write, when moved, admirable elegiac verse; and in the peculiar type of humorous lyric which he made his own, he is a master, and a master who has no rival.

SELECTIONS FROM THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

PREFACE

TO THE

VOLUME OF "STANDARD NOVELS"

CONTAINING

"HEADLONG HALL," "NIGHTMARE ABBEY," "MAID
MARIAN," AND "CROTCHET CASTLE"

ALL these little publications appeared originally without prefaces. I left them to speak for themselves, and I thought I might very fitly preserve my own impersonality, having never intruded on the personality of others, nor taken any liberties but with public conduct and public opinions. But an old friend assures me, that to publish a book without a preface is like entering a drawing-room without making a bow. In deference to this opinion, though I am not quite clear of its soundness, I make my prefatory bow at this eleventh hour.

"Headlong Hall" was written in 1815; "Nightmare Abbey," in 1817; "Maid Marian," with the exception of the last three chapters, in 1818, "Crotchet Castle," in 1830. I am desirous to note the intervals, because, at each of those periods, things were true, in great matters and in small, which are true no longer. "Headlong Hall" begins with the Holyhead Mail, and "Crotchet Castle" ends with a rotten borough. The Holyhead mail no longer keeps the same hours, nor stops at the Capel

Cerig Inn, which the progress of improvement has thrown out of the road, and the rotten boroughs of 1830 have ceased to exist, though there are some very pretty pocket properties, which are their worthy successors. But the classes of tastes, feelings, and opinions, which were successively brought into play in these little tales, remain substantially the same. Perfectibilians, deteriorationists, statu-quo-ites, phrenologists, transcendentalists, political economists, theorists in all sciences, projectors in all arts, morbid visionaries, romantic enthusiasts, lovers of music, lovers of the picturesque, and lovers of good dinners, march, and will march for ever, *pari passu* with the march of mechanics, which some facetiously call the march of intellect. The fastidious in old wine are a race that does not decay. Literary violators of the confidences of private life still gain a disreputable livelihood and an unenviable notoriety. Match-makers from interest, and the disappointed in love and in friendship, are varieties of which specimens are extant. The great principle of the Right of Maid Marian, the array of false pretensions, moral, political, and literary, is as imposing as ever. the rulers of the world still feel things in their effects, and never foresee them in their causes, and political mountebanks continue, and will continue, to puff nostrums and practise legerdemain under the eyes of the multitude, following, like the "learned friend" of Crotchet Castle, a course as tortuous as that of a river, but in a reverse process, beginning by being dark and deep, and ending by being transparent.

THE AUTHOR OF "HEADLONG HALL."

March 4, 1837.

HEADLONG HALL

[Of the characters who appear in the following extracts from Peacock's first novel, the Reverend Doctor Gaster is a mere gourmand, who had so won on Squire Headlong's fancy, "by a learned dissertation on the art of stuffing a turkey, that he concluded no Christmas party would be complete without him" Miss Philomela Poppyseed, "an indefatigable compounder of novels, written for the express purpose of supporting every species of superstition and prejudice", is a caricature of the contemporary novelist Mrs Amelia Opie, the qualities of Messrs Gall and Treacle, critics of the Edinburgh Review, are suggested by their names, the "very multitudinous versifiers", Mr Nightshade and Mr. MacLaurel, of the same periodical, stand for Southey and Campbell, Sir Patrick O'Prism is "a dilettante painter of high renown", Miss Tenorina and Miss Graziosa are the two blooming daughters of Mr Cornelius Chromatic, "the most profound and scientific of all amateurs of the fiddle", and Mr. Milestone is a caricature of Humphrey Repton, the landscape gardener. The introduction of Mr Cramm, the ardent collector of skulls, is a skit on the contemporary craze for phrenology, the beautiful Cephalis is his daughter, Mr Panscope (Coleridge) and Mr Escot are suitors for her hand. The novel opens as follows]

THE ambiguous light of a December morning, peeping through the windows of the Holyhead mail, dispelled the soft visions of the four insides, who had slept, or seemed to sleep, through the first seventy miles of the road, with as much comfort as may be supposed consistent with the jolting of the

vehicle, and an occasional admonition to *remember the coachman*, thundered through the open door, accompanied by the gentle breath of Boreas, into the ears of the drowsy traveller.

A lively remark, that *the day was none of the finest*, having elicited a repartee of *quite the contrary*, the various knotty points of meteorology, which usually form the exordium of an English conversation, were successively discussed and exhausted, and, the ice being thus broken, the colloquy rambled to other topics, in the course of which it appeared, to the surprise of every one, that all four, though perfect strangers to each other, were actually bound to the same point, namely, Headlong Hall, the seat of the ancient and honourable family of the Headlongs, of the vale of Llanberris, in Caernarvonshire. This name may appear at first sight not to be truly Cambrian, like those of the Rices, and Prices, and Morgans, and Owens, and Williamses, and Evanses, and Parrys, and Joneses, but, nevertheless, the Headlongs claim to be not less genuine derivatives from the antique branch of Cadwallader than any of the last named multiramified families. They claim, indeed, by one account, superior antiquity to all of them, and even to Cadwallader himself, a tradition having been handed down in Headlong Hall for some few thousand years, that the founder of the family was preserved in the deluge on the summit of Snowdon, and took the name of Rhaader, which signifies a *waterfall*, in consequence of his having accompanied the water in its descent or diminution, till he found himself comfortably seated on the rocks of Llanberris. But, in later days, when commercial bagsmen began to scour the country, the ambiguity of the sound induced his descendants to drop the suspicious denomination of *Riders*, and translate the word into English, when, not being well pleased with the sound of the *thing*, they substituted that of the *quality*, and accordingly

adopted the name *Headlong*, the appropriate epithet of waterfall.

I cannot tell how the truth may be
I say the tale as 't was said to me

The present representative of this ancient and dignified house, Harry Headlong, Esquire, was, like all other Welsh squires, fond of shooting, hunting, racing, drinking, and other such innocent amusements, *μειζονος δ' αλλου τινος*, as Menander expresses it. But, unlike other Welsh squires, he had actually suffered certain phenomena, called books, to find their way into his house, and, by dint of lounging over them after dinner, on those occasions when he was compelled to take his bottle alone, he became seized with a violent passion to be thought a philosopher and a man of taste, and accordingly set off on an expedition to Oxford, to inquire for other varieties of the same genera, namely, men of taste and philosophers, but, being assured by a learned professor that there were no such things in the University, he proceeded to London, where, after beating up in several booksellers' shops, theatres, exhibition-rooms, and other resorts of literature and taste, he formed as extensive an acquaintance with philosophers and dilettanti as his utmost ambition could desire; and it now became his chief wish to have them all together in Headlong Hall, arguing, over his old Port and Burgundy, the various knotty points which had puzzled his pericranium. He had, therefore, sent them invitations in due form to pass their Christmas at Headlong Hall; which invitations the extensive fame of his kitchen fire had induced the greater part of them to accept.

Squire Headlong, in the mean while, was quadripartite in his locality, that is to say, he was

superintending the operations in four scenes of action—namely, the cellar, the library, the picture-gallery, and the dining-room,—preparing for the reception of his philosophical and dilettanti visitors. His myrmidon on this occasion was a little red nosed butler, whom nature seemed to have cast in the genuine mould of an antique Silenus, and who waddled about the house after his master, wiping his forehead and panting for breath, while the latter bounced from room to room like a cracker, and was indefatigable in his requisitions for the proximity of his vinous Achates, whose advice and co-operation he deemed no less necessary in the library than in the cellar. Multitudes of packages had arrived, by land and water, from London, and Liverpool, and Chester, and Manchester, and Birmingham, and various parts of the mountains: books, wine, cheese, globes, mathematical instruments, turkeys, telescopes, hams, tongues, microscopes, quadrants, sextants, fiddles, flutes, tea, sugar, electrical machines, figs, spices, air-pumps, soda-water, chemical apparatus, eggs, French-horns, drawing books, palettes, oils and colours, bottled ale and porter, scenery for a private theatre, pickles and fish-sauce, patent lamps and chandeliers, barrels of oysters, sofas chairs, tables, carpets, beds, looking-glasses, pictures, fruits and confections, nuts, oranges, lemons, packages of salt salmon, and jars of Portugal grapes. These, arriving with infinite rapidity, and in inexhaustible succession, had been deposited at random, as the convenience of the moment dictated,—sofas in the cellar, chandeliers in the kitchen, hampers of ale in the drawing-room, and fiddles and fish-sauce in the library. The servants, unpacking all these in furious haste, and flying with them from place to place, according to the tumultuous directions of Squire Headlong and the little fat butler who fumed at his heels, chafed, and crossed, and clashed, and tumbled over one another up stairs and

down. All was bustle, uproar, and confusion ; yet nothing seemed to advance while the rage and impetuosity of the Squire continued fermenting to the highest degree of exasperation, which he signified, from time to time, by converting some newly unpacked article, such as a book, a bottle, a ham, or a fiddle, into a missile against the head of some unfortunate servant who did not seem to move in a ratio of velocity corresponding to the intensity of his master's desires.

[The first evening at Headlong Hall terminates as follows]

The Reverend Doctor Gaster seated himself in the corner of a sofa near Miss Philomela Poppyseed. Miss Philomela detailed to him the plan of a very moral and aristocratical novel she was preparing for the press, and continued holding forth, with her eyes half shut, till a long-drawn nasal tone from the reverend divine compelled her suddenly to open them in all the indignation of surprise. The cessation of the hum of her voice awakened the reverend gentleman, who, lifting up first one eyelid, then the other, articulated, or rather murmured, "Admirably planned, indeed !"

"I have not quite finished, sir," said Miss Philomela, bridling. "Will you have the goodness to inform me where I left off ?"

The doctor hummed a while, and at length answered "I think you had just laid it down as a position, that a thousand a-year is an indispensable ingredient in the passion of love, and that no man, who is not so far gifted by *nature*, can reasonably presume to feel that passion himself, or be correctly the object of it with a well-educated female."

"That, sir," said Miss Philomela, highly incensed,

"is the fundamental principle which I lay down in the first chapter, and which the whole four volumes, of which I detailed to you the outline, are intended to set in a strong practical light."

"Bless me!" said the doctor, "what a nap I must have had!"

Miss Philomela flung away to the side of her dear friends Gall and Treacle, under whose fostering patronage she had been puffed into an extensive reputation, much to the advantage of the young ladies of the age, whom she taught to consider themselves as a sort of commodity, to be put up at public auction, and knocked down to the highest bidder. Mr. Nightshade and Mr. Mac Laurel joined the trio, and it was secretly resolved, that Miss Philomela should furnish them with a portion of her manuscripts, and that Messieurs Gall and Co should devote the following morning to cutting and drying a critique on a work calculated to prove so extensively beneficial, that Mr Gall protested he really *envied* the writer.

While this amiable and enlightened quintetto were busily employed in flattering one another, Mr Cranium retired to complete the preparations he had begun in the morning for a lecture, with which he intended, on some future evening, to favour the company. Sir Patrick O'Prism walked out into the grounds to study the effect of moonlight on the snow-clad mountains. Mr Foster and Mr Escot continued to make love, and Mr Panscope to digest his plan of attack on the heart of Miss Cephalis. Mr. Jenkinson sate by the fire, reading *Much Ado about Nothing* the Reverend Doctor Gaster was still enjoying the benefit of Miss Philomela's opiate, and serenading the company from his solitary corner. Mr Chromatic was reading music, and occasionally humming a note: and Mr. Milestone had produced his portfolio for the edification and amusement of Miss Tenorina, Miss Graziosa, and Squire Headlong, to whom he was

pointing out the various beauties of his plan for Lord Littlebrain's park.

MR. MILESTONE

This, you perceive, is the natural state of one part of the grounds. Here is a wood, never yet touched by the finger of taste, thick, intricate, and gloomy. Here is a little stream, dashing from stone to stone, and overshadowed with these untrimmed boughs.

MISS TENORINA.

The sweet romantic spot! How beautifully the birds must sing there on a summer evening!

MISS GRAZIOSA.

Dear sister! how can you endure the horrid thicket?

MR. MILESTONE.

You are right, Miss Graziosa, your taste is correct—perfectly *en règle*. Now, here is the same place corrected—trimmed—polished—decorated—adorned. Here sweeps a plantation, in that beautiful regular curve: there winds a gravel walk. here are parts of the old wood, left in these majestic circular clumps, disposed at equal distances with wonderful symmetry: there are some single shrubs scattered in elegant profusion. here a Portugal laurel, there a juniper, here a laurustinus, there a spruce fir, here a larch, there a lilac, here a rhododendron, there an arbutus. The stream, you see, is become a canal, the banks are perfectly smooth and green, sloping to the water's edge. and there is Lord Littlebrain, rowing in an elegant boat.

SQUIRE HEADLONG.

Magical, faith!

MR. MILESTONE.

Here is another part of the grounds in its natural state. Here is a large rock, with the mountain-ash rooted in its fissures, overgrown, as you see, with ivy and moss, and from this part of it bursts a little fountain, that runs bubbling down its rugged sides.

MISS TENORINA

O how beautiful ! How I should love the melody of that miniature cascade !

MR MILESTONE.

Beautiful, Miss Tenorina ! Hideous. Base, common, and popular. Such a thing as you may see anywhere, in wild and mountainous districts. Now, observe the metamorphosis. Here is the same rock, cut into the shape of a giant. In one hand he holds a horn, through which that little fountain is thrown to a prodigious elevation. In the other is a ponderous stone, so exactly balanced as to be apparently ready to fall on the head of any person who may happen to be beneath : and there is Lord Littlebrain walking under it.

SQUIRE HEADLONG

Miraculous, by Mahomet !

MR. MILESTONE

This is the summit of a hill, covered, as you perceive, with wood, and with those mossy stones scattered at random under the trees

MISS TENORINA.

What a delightful spot to read in, on a summer's day ! The air must be so pure, and the wind must sound so divinely in the tops of those old pines !

MR. MILESTONE.

Bad taste, Miss Tenorina Bad taste, I assure you. Here is the spot improved The trees are cut down : the stones are cleared away · this is an octagonal pavilion, exactly on the centre of the summit : and there you see Lord Littlebrain, on the top of the pavilion, enjoying the prospect with a telescope.

SQUIRE HEADLONG.

Glorious, egad !

MR. MILESTONE.

Here is a rugged mountainous road, leading through impervious shades . the ass and the four goats characterise a wild uncultured scene. Here, as you perceive, it is totally changed into a beautiful gravel-road, gracefully curving through a belt of limes . and there is Lord Littlebrain driving four-in-hand.

SQUIRE HEADLONG.

Egregious, by Jupiter !

MR. MILESTONE.

Here is Littlebrain Castle, a Gothic, moss-grown structure, half-bosomed in trees Near the casement of that turret is an owl peeping from the ivy.

SQUIRE HEADLONG.

And devilish wise he looks.

MR. MILESTONE.

Here is the new house, without a tree near it, standing in the midst of an undulating lawn : a white, polished, angular building, reflected to a

nicety in this waveless lake . and there you see lord Littlebram looking out of the window.

SQUIRE HEADLONG.

And devilish wise he looks too You shall cut me a giant before you go.

MR MILESTONE

Good. I'll order down my little corps of pioneers

.

Sir Patrick O'Prism now entered, and, after some rapturous exclamations on the effect of the mountain-moonlight, entreated that one of the young ladies would favour him with a song Miss Tenorina and Miss Graziosa now enchanted the company with some very scientific compositions, which, as usual, excited admiration and astonishment in every one, without a single particle of genuine pleasure The beautiful Cephalis being then summoned to take her station at the harp, sang with feeling and simplicity the following air .—

LOVE AND OPPORTUNITY

Oh ! who art thou, so swiftly flying ?
 My name is Love, the child replied
 Swifter I pass than south-winds sighing,
 Or streams, through summer vales that glide
 And who art thou, his flight pursuing ?
 'T is cold Neglect whom now you see .
 The little god you there are viewing,
 Will die, if once he's touched by me

Oh ! who art thou so fast proceeding,
 Ne'er glancing back thine eyes of flame ?
 Marked but by few, through earth I'm speeding,
 And Opportunity's my name
 What form is that, which scowls beside thee ?
 Repentance is the form you see .
 Learn then, the fate may yet betide thee
 She seizes them who seize not me

The little butler now appeared with a summons to supper, shortly after which the party dispersed for the night.

[At breakfast on the following morning, Squire Headlong and Mr. Milestone "agreed, over their muffin and partridge, to walk together to a ruined tower, within the precincts of the Squire's grounds, which Mr Milestone thought he could improve"]

In all the thoughts, words, and actions of Squire Headlong, there was a remarkable alacrity of progression, which almost annihilated the interval between conception and execution. He was utterly regardless of obstacles, and seemed to have expunged their very name from his vocabulary. His designs were never nipped in their infancy by the contemplation of those trivial difficulties which often turn awry the current of enterprise; and, though the rapidity of his movements was sometimes arrested by a more formidable barrier, either naturally existing in the pursuit he had undertaken, or created by his own impetuosity, he seldom failed to succeed either in knocking it down or cutting his way through it. He had little idea of gradation: he saw no interval between the first step and the last, but pounced upon his object with the impetus of a mountain cataract. This rapidity of movement, indeed, subjected him to some disasters which cooler spirits would have escaped. He was an excellent sportsman, and almost always killed his game, but now and then he killed his dog. Rocks, streams, hedges, gates, and ditches, were objects of no account in his estimation, though a dislocated shoulder, several severe bruises, and two or three narrow escapes for his neck, might have been expected to

teach him a certain degree of caution in effecting his transitions. He was so singularly alert in climbing precipices and traversing torrents, that, when he went out on a shooting party, he was very soon left to continue his sport alone, for he was sure to dash up or down some nearly perpendicular path, where no one else had either ability or inclination to follow. He had a pleasure boat on the lake, which he steered with amazing dexterity; but as he always indulged himself in the utmost possible latitude of sail, he was occasionally upset by a sudden gust, and was indebted to his skill in the art of swimming for the opportunity of tempering with a copious libation of wine the unnatural frigidity introduced into his stomach by the extraordinary intrusion of water, an element which he had religiously determined should never pass his lips, but of which, on these occasions, he was sometimes compelled to swallow no inconsiderable quantity. This circumstance alone, of the various disasters that befel him, occasioned him any permanent affliction, and he accordingly noted the day in his pocket book as a *dies nefastus*, with this simple abstract, and brief chronicle of the calamity. *Mem. Swallowed two or three pints of water:* without any notice whatever of the concomitant circumstances. These days, of which there were several, were set apart in Headlong Hall for the purpose of anniversary expiation; and, as often as the day returned on which the squire had swallowed water, he not only made a point of swallowing a treble allowance of wine himself, but imposed a heavy mulct on every one of his servants who should be detected in a state of sobriety after sunset. but their conduct on these occasions was so uniformly exemplary, that no instance of the infliction of the penalty appears on record.

The squire and Mr Milestone, as we have already said, had set out immediately after breakfast to

examine the capabilities of the scenery. The object that most attracted Mr Milestone's admiration was a ruined tower on a projecting point of rock, almost totally overgrown with ivy. This ivy, Mr Milestone observed, required trimming and clearing in various parts: a little pointing and polishing was also necessary for the dilapidated walls: and the whole effect would be materially increased by a plantation of spruce fir, interspersed with cypress and juniper, the present rugged and broken ascent from the land side being first converted into a beautiful slope, which might be easily effected by blowing up a part of the rock with gunpowder, laying on a quantity of fine mould, and covering the whole with an elegant stratum of turf.

Squire Headlong caught with avidity at this suggestion; and, as he had always a store of gunpowder in the house, for the accommodation of himself and his shooting visitors, and for the supply of a small battery of cannon, which he kept for his private amusement, he insisted on commencing operations immediately. Accordingly, he bounded back to the house, and very speedily returned, accompanied by the little butler, and half a dozen servants and labourers, with pickaxes and gunpowder, a hanging stove and a poker, together with a basket of cold meat and two or three bottles of Madeira for the Squire thought, with many others, that a copious supply of provision is a very necessary ingredient in all rural amusements.

Mr Milestone superintended the proceedings. The rock was excavated, the powder introduced, the apertures strongly blockaded with fragments of stone. a long train was laid to a spot which Mr Milestone fixed on as sufficiently remote from the possibility of harm. the Squire seized the poker, and, after flourishing it in the air with a degree of dexterity which induced the rest of the party to leave

him in solitary possession of an extensive circumference, applied the end of it to the train ; and the rapidly communicated ignition ran hissing along the surface of the soil.

At this critical moment, Mr Cranium and Mr Panscope appeared at the top of the tower, which, unseeing and unseen, they had ascended on the opposite side to that where the Squire and Mr Milestone were conducting their operations. Their sudden appearance a little dismayed the Squire, who, however, comforted himself with the reflection, that the tower was perfectly safe, or at least was intended to be so, and that his friends were in no probable danger but of a knock on the head from a flying fragment of stone.

The succession of these thoughts in the mind of the Squire was commensurate in rapidity to the progress of the ignition, which having reached its extremity, the explosion took place, and the shattered rock was hurled into the air in the midst of fire and smoke.

Mr Milestone had properly calculated the force of the explosion ; for the tower remained untouched but the Squire, in his consolatory reflections, had omitted the consideration of the influence of sudden fear, which had so violent an effect on Mr Cranium, who was just commencing a speech concerning the very fine prospect from the top of the tower, that, cutting short the thread of his observations, he bounded, under the elastic influence of terror, several feet into the air. His ascent being unluckily a little out of the perpendicular, he descended with a proportionate curve from the apex of his projection, and alighted, not on the wall of the tower, but in an ivy-bush by its side, which, giving way beneath him, transferred him to a tuft of hazel at its base, which, after upholding him an instant, consigned him to the boughs of an ash that had rooted itself in a fissure

about half way down the rock, which finally transmitted him to the waters below

Squire Headlong anxiously watched the tower as the smoke which at first enveloped it rolled away, but when this shadowy curtain was withdrawn, and Mr. Panscope was discovered, *solus*, in a tragical attitude, his apprehensions became boundless, and he concluded that the unlucky collision of a flying fragment of rock had indeed emancipated the spirit of the craniologist from its terrestrial bondage.

Mr. Escot had considerably outstripped his companions, and arrived at the scene of the disaster just as Mr. Cranium, being utterly destitute of natatorial skill, was in imminent danger of final submersion. The deteriorationist, who had cultivated this valuable art with great success, immediately plunged in to his assistance, and brought him alive and in safety to a shelving part of the shore. Their landing was hailed with a view-holla from the delighted Squire, who, shaking them both heartily by the hand, and making ten thousand lame apologies to Mr. Cranium, concluded by asking, in a pathetic tone, *How much water he had swallowed?* and without waiting for his answer, filled a large tumbler with Madeira, and insisted on his tossing it off, which was no sooner said than done. Mr. Jenkison and Mr. Foster now made their appearance. Mr. Panscope descended the tower, which he vowed never again to approach within a quarter of a mile. The tumbler of Madeira was replenished, and handed round to recruit the spirits of the party, which now began to move towards Headlong Hall, the Squire capering for joy in the van, and the little fat butler waddling in the rear.

The Squire took care that Mr. Cranium should be seated next to him at dinner, and plied him so hard with Madeira to prevent him, as he said, from taking cold, that long before the ladies sent in their summons

to coffee, every organ in his brain was in a complete state of revolution, and the Squire was under the necessity of ringing for three or four servants to carry him to bed, observing, with a smile of great satisfaction, that he was in a very excellent way for escaping any ill consequences that might have resulted from his accident.

The beautiful Cephalis, being thus freed from his *surveillance*, was enabled, during the course of the evening, to develope to his preserver the full extent of her gratitude.

[*Shortly before the close of the novel, Squire Headlong gives his annual ball*]

Among the *dies albæ cretæ notandos*, which the beau monde of the Cambrian mountains was in the habit of remembering with the greatest pleasure, and anticipating with the most lively satisfaction, was the Christmas ball which the ancient family of the Headlongs had been accustomed to give from time immemorial. Tradition attributed the honour of its foundation to Headlong Ap-Headlong Ap-Breakneck Ap-Headlong Ap-Cataract Ap-Pistyll¹ Ap-Rhaidr Ap-Headlong, who lived about the time of the Trojan war. Certain it is, at least, that a grand chorus was always sung after supper in honour of this illustrious ancestor of the squire. This ball was, indeed, an æra in the lives of all the beauty and fashion of Caernarvon, Meirionnydd, and Anglesea, and, like the Greek Olympiads and the Roman consulates, served as the main pillar of memory, round which all the events of the year were suspended and entwined. Thus, in recalling to mind any circumstance imperfectly recollected, the principal point to be ascertained

¹ Pistyll, in Welch, signifies a cataract, and Rhaidr a cascade.

was, whether it had occurred in the year of the first, second, third, or fourth ball of Headlong Ap-Breakneck, or Headlong Ap-Torrent, or Headlong Ap-Hurricane, and, this being satisfactorily established, the remainder followed of course in the natural order of its ancient association.

This eventful anniversary being arrived, every chariot, coach, barouche, and barouchette, landau and landalet, chaise, curricle, buggy, whiskey, and tilbury, of the three counties, was in motion. not a horse was left idle within five miles of any gentleman's seat, from the high-mettled hunter to the heath-cropping galloway. The ferrymen of the Menai were at their stations before day-break, taking a double allowance of rum and *cwrw* to strengthen them for the fatigues of the day. The ivied towers of Caernarvon, the romantic woods of Tan-y-bwlch, the heathy hills of Kernioggau, the sandy shores of Tremadoc, the mountain recesses of Bedd-Gelert, and the lonely lakes of Capel-Cerig, re-echoed to the voices of the delighted ostlers and postillions, who reaped on this happy day their wintry harvest. Landlords and landladies, waiters, chambermaids, and toll-gate keepers, roused themselves from the torpidity which the last solitary tourist, flying with the yellow leaves on the wings of the autumnal wind, had left them to enjoy till the returning spring: the bustle of August was renewed on all the mountain roads, and, in the meanwhile, Squire Headlong and his little fat butler carried most energetically into effect the lessons of the *savant* in the Court of Quintessence, *qui par engin mirifique jectoit les maisons par les fenestres*.¹

It was the custom for the guests to assemble at dinner on the day of the ball, and depart on the following morning after breakfast. Sleep during this interval was out of the question: the ancient

¹ Rabelais

harp of Cambria suspended the celebration of the noble race of Shenkin, and the songs of Hoel and Cyveilioc, to ring to the profaner but more lively modulation of *Voulez vous danser, Mademoiselle* in conjunction with the symphonious scraping of fiddles, the tinkling of triangles, and the beating of tambourines. Comus and Momus were the deities of the night, and Bacchus of course was not forgotten by the male part of the assembly (with them, indeed, a ball was invariably a scene of "*tipsy dance and jollity*"): the servants flew about with wine and negus, and the little butler was indefatigable with his cork-screw, which is reported on one occasion to have grown so hot under the influence of perpetual friction that it actually set fire to the cork.

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An old squire, who had not missed one of these anniversaries, during more than half a century, now stood up, and filling a half-pint bumper, pronounced, with a stentorian voice—"To the immortal memory of Headlong Ap-Rhaiader, and to the health of his noble descendant and worthy representative!" This example was followed by all the gentlemen present. The harp struck up a triumphal strain, and, the old squire already mentioned vociferating the first stave, they sang, or rather roared, the following

CHORUS

Hail to the Headlong! the Headlong Ap-Headlong!
 All hail to the Headlong, the Headlong Ap-Headlong!
 The Headlong Ap-Headlong
 Ap-Breakneck Ap-Headlong
 Ap-Cataract Ap-Pistyll Ap-Rhaiader Ap-Headlong!

The bright bowl we steep in the name of the Headlong
 Let the youths pledge it deep to the Headlong Ap-Headlong,
 And the rosy-lipped lasses
 Touch the brim as it passes,
 And kiss the red tide for the Headlong Ap-Headlong!

HEADLONG HALL

21

The loud harp resounds in the hall of the Headlong
The light step rebounds in the hall of the Headlong
 Where shall music invite us,
 Or beauty delight us,
If not in the hall of the Headlong Ap-Headlong ?

Huzza ! to the health of the Headlong Ap-Headlong !
Fill the bowl, fill in floods, to the health of the Headlong !
 Till the stream ruby-glowing,
 On all sides o'erflowing,
Shall fall in cascades to the health of the Headlong !
 The Headlong Ap-Headlong
 Ap-Breakneck Ap-Headlong
Ap-Cataract Ap-Pistyll Ap-Rhaiader Ap-Headlong !

Squire Headlong returned thanks with an appropriate libation, and the company readjourned to the ball-room, where they kept it up till sun-rise, when the little butler summoned them to breakfast.

SONG ¹

In his last binn SIR PETER lies,
Who knew not what it was to frown
Death took him mellow, by surprise,
And in his cellar stopped him down.
Through all our land we could not boast
A knight more gay, more prompt than he,
To rise and fill a bumper toast,
And pass it round with THREE TIMES THREE

None better knew the feast to sway,
Or keep Mirth's boat in better trim ,
For Nature had but little clay
Like that of which she moulded him
The meanest guest that graced his board
Was there the freest of the free,
His bumper toast when PETER poured,
And passed it round with THREE TIMES THREE

He kept at true good humour's mark
The social flow of pleasure's tide .
He never made a brow look dark,
Nor caused a tear, but when he died
No sorrow round his tomb should dwell
More pleased his gay old ghost would be,
For funeral song, and passing bell,
To hear no sound but THREE TIMES THREE.

¹ [*Sung by Mr. Chromatic.*]

MELINCOURT

[Peacock's second novel was published in 1817. The following Preface was written by him in 1856 for the second edition]

PREFACE

"MELINCOURT" was first published thirty-nine years ago. Many changes have since occurred, social, mechanical, and political. The boroughs of Onevote and Threevotes have been extinguished; but there remain boroughs of Few-votes, in which Sir Oran Haut-ton might still find a free and enlightened constituency. Beards disfigure the face, and tobacco poisons the air, in a degree not then imagined. A boy, with a cigar in his mouth, was a phenomenon yet unborn. Multitudinous bubbles have been blown and have burst: sometimes prostrating dupes and impostors together, sometimes leaving a colossal jobber upright in his triumphal chariot, which has crushed as many victims as the car of Juggernaut. Political mountebanks have founded profitable investments on public gullibility. British colonists have been compelled to emancipate their slaves, and foreign slave labour, under the pretext of free trade, has been brought to bear against them by the friends of liberty. The Court is more moral. therefore, the public is more moral; more decorous, at least, in external semblance, wherever the homage, which Hypocrisy pays to Virtue, can yield any profit to the professor; but always ready for the same reaction, with which the profligacy of the Restoration rolled, like a spring-tide, over the puritanism of the Commonwealth.

The progress of intellect, with all deference to those who believe in it, is not quite so obvious as the progress of mechanics. The "reading public" has increased its capacity of swallow, in a proportion far exceeding that of its digestion. Thirty-nine years ago, steam-boats were just coming into action, and the railway locomotive was not even thought of. Now everybody goes everywhere going for the sake of going, and rejoicing in the rapidity with which they accomplish nothing. *On va, mais on ne voyage pas.* Strenuous idleness drives us on the wings of steam in boats and trains, seeking the art of enjoying life, which, after all, is in the regulation of the mind, and not in the whisking about of the body.¹ Of the disputants whose opinions and public characters (for I never trespassed on private life) were shadowed in some of the persons of the story, almost all have passed from the diurnal scene. Many of the questions, discussed in the dialogues, have more of general than of temporary application, and have still their advocates on both sides and new questions have arisen, which furnish abundant argument for similar conversations, and of which I may yet, perhaps, avail myself on some future occasion.

THE AUTHOR OF "HEADLONG HALL"

March, 1856.

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¹ Hor. *Epist.* I. ii. 27-30

THE BOROUGH OF ONEVOTE

[*Mr. Forester, having a theory that the orang-outang is nearly allied to humanity, makes experiments on a very intelligent specimen from Angola, who takes readily to civilised dress, food, and liquor, and even acquires the art of playing the French horn, but not that of speech Mr. Forester buys him a baronetcy, gives him an estate, and purchases from the Duke of Rottenburgh a seat in parliament, to which, in the following chapter, Sir Oran Haut-ton is duly elected*]

The day of election arrived Mr. Sarcastic's rumoured preparations, and the excellence of the ale which he had broached in the city of Novote, had given a degree of *éclat* to the election for the borough of Onevote, which it had never before possessed, the representatives usually sliding into their nomination with the same silence and decorum with which a solitary spinster slides into her pew at Wednesday or Friday's prayers in a country church The resemblance holds good also in this respect, that, as the curate addresses the solitary maiden with the appellation of *dearly beloved brethren*, so the representatives always pluralized their solitary elector, by conferring on him the appellation of *a respectable body of constituents* Mr Sarcastic, however, being determined to amuse himself at the expense of this most "venerable feature" in our old constitution, as Lord C calls a rotten borough, had brought Mr. Christopher Corporate into his views, by the adhibition of *persuasion in a tangible shape* It was generally known in Novote, that something would be going forward at Onevote, though nobody could tell precisely what, except that a long train of brewer's

drays had left the city for the borough, in grand procession, on the preceeding day, under the escort of a sworn band of special constables, who were to keep guard over the ale all night. This detachment was soon followed by another, under a similar escort, and with similar injunctions. and it was understood that this second expedition of *frothy rhetoric* was sent forth under the auspices of Sir Oran Haut-ton, Baronet, the brother candidate of Simon Sarcastic, Esquire, for the representation of the ancient and honourable borough.

The borough of Onevote stood in the middle of a heath, and consisted of a solitary farm, of which the land was so poor and untractable, that it would not have been worth the while of any human being to cultivate it, had not the Duke of Rottenburgh found it very well worth his to pay his tenant for living there, to keep the honourable borough in existence.

Mr. Sarcastic left the city of Novote some hours before his new acquaintance, to superintend his preparations, followed by crowds of persons of all descriptions, pedestrians and equestrians, old ladies in chariots, and young ladies on donkies, the farmer on his hunter, and the tailor on his hack; the grocer and his family six in a chaise, the dancing-master in his tilbury; the banker in his tandem; mantua-makers and servant-maids twenty-four in the waggon, fitted up for the occasion with a canopy of evergreens, pastry-cooks, men-milliners, and journeymen tailors, by the stage, running for that day only, six inside and fourteen out, the sallow artizan emerging from the cellar or the furnace, to freshen himself with the pure breezes of Onevote Heath, the bumpkin in his laced boots and Sunday coat, trudging through the dust with his cherry-cheeked lass on his elbow; the gentleman coachman on his box, with his painted charmer by his side; the lean curate on his half-starved Rosinante; the plump bishop setting an

example of Christian humility in his carriage and six ; the doctor on his white horse, like Death in the Revelations , and the lawyer on his black one, like the devil in the Wild Huntsmen.

Almost in the rear of this motley cavalcade went the barouche of Sir Telegraph Paxarett, and rolled up to the scene of action amidst the shouts of the multitude.

The heath had very much the appearance of a race ground ; with booths and stalls, the voices of pie-men and apple-women, the grinding of barrel organs, the scraping of fiddles, the squeaking of ballad-singers, the chirping of corkscrews, the vociferations of ale-drinkers, the cries of the " last dying speeches of desperate malefactors," and of " The History and Antiquities of the honourable Borough of Onevote, a full and circumstantial account, all in half a sheet, for the price of one halfpenny ! "

The hustings were erected in proper form, and immediately opposite to them was an enormous marquee with a small opening in front, in which was seated the important person of Mr Christopher Corporate, with a tankard of ale and a pipe. The ladies remained in the barouche under the care of Sir Telegraph and Mr Hippy. Mr Forester, Mr Fax, and Sir Oran Haut-ton, joined Mr. Sarcastic on the hustings.

Mr Sarcastic stepped forward amidst the shouts of the assembled crowd, and addressed Mr Christopher Corporate :

" Free, fat, and dependent burgess of this ancient and honourable borough ! I stand forward an unworthy candidate, to be the representative of so important a personage, who comprises in himself a three hundredth part of the whole elective capacity of this extensive empire. For if the whole population be estimated at eleven millions, with what awe and veneration must I look on one, who is, as it were

the abstract and quintessence of thirty-three thousand six hundred and sixty-six people! The voice of Stentor was like the voice of fifty, and the voice of Harry Gill ¹ was like the voice of three, but what are these to the voice of Mr Christopher Corporate, which gives utterance in one breath to the concentrated power of thirty-three thousand six hundred and sixty-six voices? Of such an one it may indeed be said, that *he is himself an host*, and that *none but himself can be his parallel*

"Most potent, grave, and reverend signor! it is usual on these occasions to make a great vapouring about honour and conscience. but as those words are now generally acknowledged to be utterly destitute of meaning, I have too much respect for your understanding to say any thing about them. The *monied interest*, Mr Corporate, for which you are as illustrious as the *sun at noon-day*, is the great point of connexion and sympathy between us and no circumstances can throw a *wet blanket* on the ardour of our reciprocal esteem, while the *fundamental feature* of our mutual interests presents itself to us in *so tangible a shape* ² How high a value I set upon your voice, you may judge by the price I have paid for half of it. which, indeed, deeply lodged as my feelings are in my pocket, I yet see no reason to regret, since you will thus confer on mine, a transmutable and marketable value, which I trust with proper management will leave me no loser by the bargain.

"Huzza!" said Mr. Corporate.

"People of the city of Novote!" proceeded Mr Sarcastic, "some of you, I am informed, consider yourselves aggrieved, that, while your large and populous city has no share whatever in the formation of the Honourable House, the *plural unity* of Mr. Christopher Corporate should be invested with the

¹ See Mr Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads*.

² The figures of speech marked in Italics are familiar to the admirers of parliamentary rhetoric.

privilege of double representation But, gentlemen, representation is of two kinds, actual, and virtual an important distinction, and of great political consequence

"The Honourable Baronet and myself being the actual representatives of the fat burghess of Onevote, shall be the virtual representatives of the worthy citizens of Novote, and you may rely on it, gentlemen, (*with his hand on his heart,*) we shall always be deeply attentive to your interests, when they happen, as no doubt they sometimes will, to be perfectly compatible with our own.

"A member of Parliament, gentlemen, to speak to you in your own phrase, is a sort of staple commodity, manufactured for home consumption Much has been said of the improvement of machinery in the present age, by which one man may do the work of a dozen If this be admirable, and admirable it is acknowledged to be by all the civilized world, how much more admirable is the improvement of political machinery, by which one man does the work of thirty thousand I am sure, I need not say another word to a great manufacturing population like the inhabitants of the city of Novote, to convince them of the beauty and utility of this most luminous arrangement.

"The duty of a representative of the people, whether actual or virtual, is simply *to tax* Now this important branch of public business is much more easily and expeditiously transacted by the means of virtual, than it possibly could be by that of actual representation. For when the minister draws up his scheme of ways and means, he will do it with much more celerity and confidence, when he knows that the propitious countenance of virtual representation will never cease to smile upon him as long as he continues in place, than if he had to encounter the doubtful aspect of actual representation, which might, perhaps, look black on some of his favourite

projects, thereby greatly impeding the distribution of secret service money at home, and placing foreign legitimacy in a very awkward predicament. The carriage of the state would then be like a chariot in a forest, turning to the left for a troublesome thorn, and to the right for a sturdy oak; whereas it now rolls forward like the car of Jaggernaut over the plain, crushing whatever offers to impede its way.

"The constitution says that no man shall be taxed but by his own consent—a very plausible theory, gentlemen, but not reducible to practice. Who will apply a lancet to his own arm, and bleed himself? Very few, you acknowledge. Who then, *à fortiori*, would apply a lancet to his own pocket, and draw off what is dearer to him than his blood—his money? Fewer still of course: I humbly opine, none.—What then remains but to appoint a royal college of state surgeons, who may operate on the patient according to their views of his case? Taxation is political phlebotomy. the Honourable House is, figuratively speaking, a royal college of state surgeons. A good surgeon must have firm nerves and a steady hand, and, perhaps, the less feeling the better. Now, it is manifest, that, as all feeling is founded on sympathy, the fewer constituents a representative has, the less must be his sympathy with the public, and the less, of course, as is desirable, his feeling for his patient—the people:—who, therefore, with so much *sangfroid* can phlebotomize the nation, as the representative of half an elector?

"Gentlemen, as long as a *full Gazette* is pleasant to the *quidnunc*, as long as an empty purse is delightful to the spendthrift, as long as the cry of *Question* is a satisfactory *answer* to an argument, and to outvote reason, is to refute it, as long as the way to pay old debts is to incur new ones of five times the amount, as long as the grand recipes of political health and longevity are *bleeding* and *hot water*—so

long must you rejoice in the privileges of Mr. Christopher Corporate, so long must you acknowledge, from the very bottom of your pockets, the benefits and blessings of *virtual representation*”

This harangue was received with great applause, acclamations rent the air, and ale flowed in torrents. Mr Forester declined speaking, and the party on the hustings proceeded to business. Sir Oran Haut-ton, Baronet, and Simon Sarcastic, Esquire, were nominated in form. Mr Christopher Corporate held up both his hands, with his tankard in one, and his pipe in the other and neither poll nor scrutiny being demanded, the two candidates were pronounced duly elected, as representatives of the ancient and honourable borough of Onevote

The shouts were renewed: the ale flowed rapidly: the pipe and tankard of Mr Corporate were replenished. Sir Oran Haut-ton, Baronet, M P, bowed gracefully to the people with his hand on his heart.

A cry was now raised of “Chair ’em! chair ’em!” when Mr Sarcastic again stepped forward

“Gentlemen!” said he, “a slight difficulty opposes itself to the honour you would confer on us. The members should, according to form, be chaired by their electors and how can one elector, great man as he is, chair two representatives? But to obviate this dilemma as well as circumstances admit, I move that the ‘large body corporate of one’ whom the Honourable Baronet and myself have the honour to represent, do resolve himself into a committee”

He had no sooner spoken, than the marquee opened, and a number of bulky personages, all in dress, aspect, size, and figure, very exact resemblances of Mr Christopher Corporate, each with his pipe and his tankard, emerged into daylight, who encircling their venerable prototype, lifted their tankards high in air, and pronounced with Stentorian symphony,

"HAIL, PLURAL UNIT!" Then, after a simultaneous draught, throwing away their pipes and tankards, for which the mob immediately scrambled, they raised on high two magnificent chairs, and prepared to carry into effect the last ceremony of the election. The party on the hustings descended. Mr Sarcastic stepped into his chair, and his part of the procession, headed by Mr. Christopher Corporate, and surrounded by a multiform and many-coloured crowd, moved slowly off towards the city of Novote, amidst the undistinguishable clamour of multitudinous voices.

Sir Oran Haut-ton watched the progress of his precursor, as his chair rolled and swayed over the sea of heads, like a boat with one mast on a stormy ocean, and the more he watched the agitation of its movements, the more his countenance gave indications of strong dislike to the process, so that when his seat in the second chair was offered to him, he with a very polite bow declined the honour. The party that was to carry him, thinking that his repugnance arose entirely from diffidence, proceeded with gentle force to overcome his scruples, when not precisely penetrating their motives, and indignant at this attempt to violate the freedom of the natural man, he seized a stick from a sturdy farmer at his elbow, and began to lay about him with great vigour and effect. Those who escaped being knocked down by the first sweep of his weapon, ran away with all their might, but were soon checked by the pressure of the crowd, who hearing the noise of conflict, and impatient to ascertain the cause, bore down from all points upon a common centre, and formed a circumferential pressure that effectually prohibited the egress of those within; and they in their turn, in their eagerness to escape from Sir Oran (who, like Artegall's Iron Man, or like Ajax among the Trojans, or like Rhodomont in Paris, or like Orlando among the

soldiers of Agramant, kept clearing for himself an ample space, in the midst of the encircling crowd), waged desperate conflict with those without, so that from the equal and opposite action of the centripetal and centrifugal forces, resulted a stationary combat raging between the circumferences of two concentric circles, with barbaric dissonance of deadly feud, and infinite variety of oath and execration, till Sir Oran, charging desperately along one of the radii, fought a free passage through all opposition, and rushing to the barouche of Sir Telegraph Paxarett, sprang to his old station on the box, from whence he shook his sapling at the foe, with looks of mortal defiance. Mr Forester, who had been forcibly parted from him at the commencement of the strife, and had been all anxiety on his account, mounted with great alacrity to his station on the roof. the rest of the party was already seated. the Honourable Mrs. Pinmoney, half-fainting with terror, earnestly entreated Sir Telegraph to fly. Sir Telegraph cracked his whip. the horses sprang forward like racers. the wheels went round like the wheels of a firework. The tumult of battle lessening as they receded, came wafted to them on the wings of the wind. for the flame of discord having been once kindled, was not extinguished by the departure of its first flambeau—Sir Oran, but war raged wide and far, here in the thickest mass of central fight, there in the light skirmishing of flying detachments. The hustings were demolished, and the beams and planks turned into offensive weapons. the booths were torn to pieces, and the canvass converted into flags floating over the heads of magnanimous heroes that rushed to revenge they knew not what, in deadly battle with they knew not whom. The stalls and barrows were upset, and the pears, apples, oranges, mutton-pies, and masses of ginger-bread, flew like missiles of fate in all directions. The *sanctum*

sanctorum of the ale was broken into, and the guardians of the Hesperian liquor were put to ignominious rout. Hats and wigs were hurled into the air, never to return to the heads from which they had suffered violent divorce. The collision of sticks, the ringing of empty ale-casks, the shrieks of women, and the vociferations of combatants, mingled in one deepening and indescribable tumult: till at length, every thing else being levelled with the heath, they turned the mingled torrent of their wrath on the cottage of Mr Corporate, to which they triumphantly set fire, and danced round the blaze, like a rabble of village boys round the effigy of the immortal Guy. In a few minutes the ancient and honourable borough of Onevote was reduced to ashes: but we have the satisfaction to state that it was rebuilt a few days afterwards, at the joint expense of its two representatives, and His Grace the Duke of Rottenburgh.

GLEE—THE GHOSTS ¹

In life three ghostly friars were we,
And now three friarly ghosts we be
Around our shadowy table placed,
The spectral bowl before us floats
With wine that none but ghosts can taste,
We wash our unsubstantial throats
Three merry ghosts—three merry ghosts—three merry
ghosts are we
Let the ocean be Port, and we'll think it good sport
To be laid in that Red Sea

With songs that jovial spectres chaunt,
Our old refectory still we haunt
The traveller hears our midnight mirth
"O list!" he cries, "the haunted choir!"
"The merriest ghost that walks the earth,
"Is sure the ghost of a ghostly friar!"

¹ [Sung by Mr O'Scarum, Sir Telegraph Paxarett, and the
Reverend Mr Portpipe]

NIGHTMARE ABBEY

[*"The transcendental Mr. Flosky", in this novel, is a caricature of Coleridge, and Mr. Listless of a contemporary dandy, Sir Lumley Skeffington, Mr Toobad represents Shelley's eccentric friend J. F. Newton, Mr Sackbut is Southey (then Poet Laureate); Mr Cypress is Byron (with his pessimism and self-pity brought into high relief), and Scythrop is a very vivid, though comically exaggerated, portrait of Shelley in his callow and romantic youth. Marionetta is modelled to some extent on Shelley's first wife, Harriet Westbrook. Mr Asterias, the ichthyologist, is an eccentric personage who maintains the origin of all things from water, and has hurried down from London with his son Aquarius to investigate a report that a mermaid has been seen on the sea-coast of Lincolnshire. The novel opens as follows.]*

NIGHTMARE ABBEY, a venerable family-mansion, in a highly picturesque state of semi-dilapidation, pleasantly situated on a strip of dry land between the sea and the fens, at the verge of the county of Lincoln, had the honour to be the seat of Christopher Glowry, Esquire. This gentleman was naturally of an atrabilious temperament, and much troubled with those phantoms of indigestion which are commonly called *blue devils*. He had been deceived in an early friendship. he had been crossed in love, and had offered his hand, from pique, to a lady, who accepted it from interest, and who, in so doing, violently tore asunder the bonds of a tried and youthful attachment. Her vanity was gratified by being the mistress of a very extensive, if not very lively, establishment, but all the springs of her sympathies were frozen. Riches she possessed, but

that which enriches them, the participation of affection, was wanting. All that they could purchase for her became indifferent to her, because that which they could not purchase, and which was more valuable than themselves, she had, for their sake, thrown away. She discovered, when it was too late, that she had mistaken the means for the end—that riches, rightly used, are instruments of happiness, but are not in themselves happiness. In this wilful blight of her affections, she found them valueless as means. They had been the end to which she had immolated all her affections, and were now the only end that remained to her. She did not confess this to herself as a principle of action, but it operated through the medium of unconscious self-deception, and terminated in inveterate avarice. She laid on external things the blame of her mind's internal disorder, and thus became by degrees an accomplished scold. She often went her daily rounds through a series of deserted apartments, every creature in the house vanishing at the creak of her shoe, much more at the sound of her voice, to which the nature of things affords no simile, for, as far as the voice of woman, when attuned by gentleness and love, transcends all other sounds in harmony, so far does it surpass all others in discord, when stretched into unnatural shrillness by anger and impatience.

Mr Glowry used to say that his house was no better than a spacious kennel, for every one in it led the life of a dog. Disappointed both in love and in friendship, and looking upon human learning as vanity, he had come to a conclusion that there was but one good thing in the world, *videlicet*, a good dinner; and thus his parsimonious lady seldom suffered him to enjoy but, one morning, like Sir Leoline in *Christabel*, "he woke and found his lady dead," and remained a very consolate widower, with one small child.

This only son and heir Mr Glowry had christened Scythrop, from the name of a maternal ancestor, who had hanged himself one rainy day in a fit of *tædium vitæ*, and had been eulogised by a coroner's jury in the comprehensive phrase of *felo de se*, on which account, Mr. Glowry held his memory in high honour, and made a punchbowl of his skull

When Scythrop grew up, he was sent, as usual, to a public school, where a little learning was painfully beaten into him, and from thence to the university, where it was carefully taken out of him, and he was sent home like a well-threshed ear of corn, with nothing in his head. having finished his education to the high satisfaction of the master and fellows of his college, who had, in testimony of their approbation, presented him with a silver fish-slice, on which his name figured at the head of a laudatory inscription in some semi-barbarous dialect of Anglo-Saxonised Latin.

His fellow-students, however, who drove tandem and random in great perfection, and were connoisseurs in good inns, had taught him to drink deep ere he departed. He had passed much of his time with these choice spirits, and had seen the rays of the midnight lamp tremble on many a lengthening file of empty bottles. He passed his vacations sometimes at Nightmare Abbey, sometimes in London, at the house of his uncle, Mr. Hilary, a very cheerful and elastic gentleman, who had married the sister of the melancholy Mr. Glowry. The company that frequented his house was the gayest of the gay. Scythrop danced with the ladies and drank with the gentlemen, and was pronounced by both a very accomplished charming fellow, and an honour to the university.

At the house of Mr Hilary, Scythrop first saw the beautiful Miss Emily Girouette. He fell in love; which is nothing new. He was favourably received,

which is nothing strange. Mr Glowry and Mr. Girouette had a meeting on the occasion, and quarrelled about the terms of the bargain, which is neither new nor strange. The lovers were torn asunder, weeping and vowing everlasting constancy; and, in three weeks after this tragical event, the lady was led a smiling bride to the altar, by the Honourable Mr Lackwit, which is neither strange nor new.

Scythrop received this intelligence at Nightmare Abbey, and was half distracted on the occasion. It was his first disappointment, and preyed deeply on his sensitive spirit. His father, to comfort him, read him a Commentary on Ecclesiastes, which he had himself composed, and which demonstrated incontrovertibly that all is vanity. He insisted particularly on the text, "One man among a thousand have I found, but a woman amongst all those have I not found."

"How could he expect it," said Scythrop, "when the whole thousand were locked up in his seraglio? His experience is no precedent for a free state of society like that in which we live."

"Locked up or at large," said Mr Glowry, "the result is the same. their minds are always locked up, and vanity and interest keep the key. I speak feelingly, Scythrop."

"I am sorry for it, sir," said Scythrop. "But how is it that their minds are locked up? The fault is in their artificial education, which studiously models them into mere musical dolls, to be set out for sale in the great toy-shop of society."

"To be sure," said Mr. Glowry, "their education is not so well finished as yours has been, and your idea of a musical doll is good. I bought one myself, but it was confoundedly out of tune; but, whatever be the cause, Scythrop, the effect is certainly this, that one is pretty nearly as good as another, as far as any judgment can be formed of them before

marriage It is only after marriage that they show their true qualities, as I know by bitter experience Marriage is, therefore, a lottery, and the less choice and selection a man bestows on his ticket the better, for, if he has incurred considerable pains and expense to obtain a lucky number, and his lucky number proves a blank, he experiences not a simple, but a complicated disappointment, the loss of labour and money being superadded to the disappointment of drawing a blank, which, constituting simply and entirely the grievance of him who has chosen his ticket at random, is, from its simplicity, the more endurable" This very excellent reasoning was thrown away upon Scythrop, who retired to his tower as dismal and disconsolate as before

The tower which Scythrop inhabited stood at the south-eastern angle of the Abbey, and, on the southern side, the foot of the tower opened on a terrace, which was called the garden, though nothing grew on it but ivy, and a few amphibious weeds. The south-western tower, which was rumorous and full of owls, might, with equal propriety, have been called the aviary. This terrace or garden, or terrace-garden, or garden-terrace (the reader may name it *ad libitum*), took in an oblique view of the open sea, and fronted a long tract of level sea-coast, and a fine monotony of fens and windmills

The reader will judge, from what we have said, that this building was a sort of castellated abbey, and it will, probably, occur to him to inquire if it had been one of the strong-holds of the ancient church militant Whether this was the case, or how far it had been indebted to the taste of Mr Glowry's ancestors for any transmutations from its original state, are, unfortunately, circumstances not within the pale of our knowledge.

The north-western tower contained the apartments of Mr Glowry The moat at its base, and the fens

beyond, comprised the whole of his prospect. This moat surrounded the Abbey, and was in immediate contact with the walls on every side but the south.

The north-eastern tower was appropriated to the domestics, whom Mr Glowry always chose by one of two criterions,—a long face, or a dismal name. His butler was Raven, his steward was Crow, his valet was Skellet. Mr Glowry maintained that the valet was of French extraction, and that his name was Squelette. His grooms were Mattocks and Graves. On one occasion, being in want of a footman, he received a letter from a person signing himself Diggory Deathshead, and lost no time in securing this acquisition, but on Diggory's arrival, Mr Glowry was horror-struck by the sight of a round ruddy face, and a pair of laughing eyes. Deathshead was always grinning,—not a ghastly smile, but the grin of a comic mask, and disturbed the echoes of the hall with so much unhallowed laughter, that Mr Glowry gave him his discharge. Diggory, however, had staid long enough to make conquests of all the old gentleman's maids, and left him a flourishing colony of young Deathsheads to join chorus with the owls, that had before been the exclusive choristers of Nightmare Abbey.

The main body of the building was divided into rooms of state, spacious apartments for feasting, and numerous bed-rooms for visitors, who, however, were few and far between.

Family interests compelled Mr Glowry to receive occasional visits from Mr and Mrs Hilary, who paid them from the same motive, and, as the lively gentleman on these occasions found few conductors for his exuberant gaiety, he became like a double-charged electric jar, which often exploded in some burst of outrageous merriment to the signal discomposure of Mr. Glowry's nerves.

Another occasional visitor, much more to Mr.

Glowry's taste, was Mr Flosky,¹ a very lachrymose and morbid gentleman, of some note in the literary world, but in his own estimation of much more merit than name. The part of his character which recommended him to Mr. Glowry, was his very fine sense of the grim and the tearful. No one could relate a dismal story with so many minutæ of supererogatory wretchedness. No one could call up a *raw-head and bloody bones* with so many adjuncts and circumstances of ghastliness. Mystery was his mental element. He lived in the midst of that visionary world in which nothing is but what is not. He dreamed with his eyes open, and saw ghosts dancing round him at noontide. He had been in his youth an enthusiast for liberty, and had hailed the dawn of the French Revolution as the promise of a day that was to banish war and slavery, and every form of vice and misery, from the face of the earth. Because all this was not done, he deduced that nothing was done, and from this deduction, according to his system of logic, he drew a conclusion that worse than nothing was done, that the overthrow of the feudal fortresses of tyranny and superstition was the greatest calamity that had ever befallen mankind, and that their only hope now was to rake the rubbish together, and rebuild it without any of those loopholes by which the light had originally crept in. To qualify himself for a coadjutor in this laudable task, he plunged into the central opacity of Kantian metaphysics, and lay *perdu* several years in transcendental darkness, till the common daylight of common sense became intolerable to his eyes. He called the sun an *ignis fatuus*; and exhorted all who would listen to his friendly voice, which were about as many as called "God save King Richard," to shelter themselves from its delusive radiance in the obscure haunt of Old Philosophy.

¹ A corruption of Filosky, quasi φιλοσκιος a lover, or sectator, of shadows

This word Old had great charms for him. The good old times were always on his lips, meaning the days when polemic theology was in its prime, and rival prelates beat the drum ecclesiastic with Herculean vigour, till the one wound up his series of syllogisms with the very orthodox conclusion of roasting the other.

But the dearest friend of Mr Glowry, and his most welcome guest, was Mr. Toobad, the Manichæan Millenarian. The twelfth verse of the twelfth chapter of Revelations was always in his mouth: "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come among you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." He maintained that the supreme dominion of the world was, for wise purposes, given over for a while to the Evil Principle, and that this precise period of time, commonly called the enlightened age, was the point of his plenitude of power. He used to add that by and by he would be cast down, and a high and happy order of things succeed, but he never omitted the saving clause, "Not in our time" which last words were always echoed in doleful response by the sympathetic Mr. Glowry.

Another and very frequent visitor, was the Reverend Mr Larynx, the vicar of Claydyke, a village about ten miles distant,—a good-natured accommodating divine, who was always most obligingly ready to take a dinner and a bed at the house of any country gentleman in distress for a companion. Nothing came amiss to him,—a game at billiards, at chess, at draughts, at backgammon, at piquet, or at all-fours in a *tête-a-tête*,—or any game on the cards, round, square, or triangular, in a party of any number exceeding two. He would even dance among friends, rather than that a lady, even if she were on the wrong side of thirty, even if she were on the wrong side of thirty, should sit still for want of a partner. For a ride, a walk, or a sail, in the morning,

—a song after dinner, a ghost story after supper,—a bottle of port with the squire, or a cup of green tea with his lady,—for all or any of these, or for any thing else that was agreeable to any one else, consistently with the dye of his coat, the Reverend Mr Larynx was at all times equally ready When at Nightmare Abbey, he would condole with Mr. Glowry,—drink Madeira with Scythrop,—crack jokes with Mr Hilary,—hand Mrs Hilary to the piano, take charge of her fan and gloves, and turn over her music with surprising dexterity,—quote Revelations with Mr Toobad,—and lament the good old times of feudal darkness with the transcendental Mr Flosky

Shortly after the disastrous termination of Scythrop's passion for Miss Emily Girouette, Mr Glowry found himself, much against his will, involved in a lawsuit, which compelled him to dance attendance on the High Court of Chancery Scythrop was left alone at Nightmare Abbey. He was a burnt child, and dreaded the fire of female eyes He wandered about the ample pile, or along the garden-terrace, with "his cogitative faculties immersed in cogibundity of cogitation" The terrace terminated at the south-western tower, which, as we have said, was ruinous and full of owls Here would Scythrop take his evening seat, on a fallen fragment of mossy stone, with his back resting against the ruined wall,—a thick canopy of ivy, with an owl in it, over his head,—and the Sorrows of Werter in his hand He had some taste for romance reading before he went to the university, where, we must confess, in justice to his college, he was cured of the love of reading in all its shapes, and the cure would have been radical, if disappointment in love, and total solitude, had not conspired to bring on a relapse He began to devour romances and German tragedies, and, by the recommendation of Mr. Flosky, to pore over ponderous

tomes of transcendental philosophy, which reconciled him to the labour of studying them by their mystical jargon and necromantic imagery. In the congenial solitude of Nightmare Abbey, the distempered ideas of metaphysical romance and romantic metaphysics had ample time and space to germinate into a fertile crop of chimeras, which rapidly shot up into vigorous and abundant vegetation.

He now became troubled with the *passion for reforming the world*. He built many castles in the air, and peopled them with secret tribunals, and bands of illuminati, who were always the imaginary instruments of his projected regeneration of the human species. As he intended to institute a perfect republic, he invested himself with absolute sovereignty over these mystical dispensers of liberty. He slept with Horrid Mysteries under his pillow, and dreamed of venerable eleutherarchs and ghastly confederates holding midnight conventions in subterranean caves. He passed whole mornings in his study, immersed in gloomy reverie, stalking about the room in his night-cap, which he pulled over his eyes like a cowl, and folding his striped calico dressing-gown about him like the mantle of a conspirator.

"Action," thus he soliloquised, "is the result of opinion, and to new-model opinion would be to new-model society. Knowledge is power, it is in the hands of a few, who employ it to mislead the many, for their own selfish purposes of aggrandisement and appropriation. What if it were in the hands of a few who should employ it to lead the many? What if it were universal, and the multitude were enlightened? No. The many must be always in leading-strings, but let them have wise and honest conductors. A few to think, and many to act; that is the only basis of perfect society. So thought the ancient philosophers: they had their esoterical and exoterical doctrines. So thinks the sublime Kant, who delivers

his oracles in language which none but the initiated can comprehend. Such were the views of those secret associations of illuminati, which were the terror of superstition and tyranny, and which, carefully selecting wisdom and genius from the great wilderness of society, as the bee selects honey from the flowers of the thorn and the nettle, bound all human excellence in a chain, which, if it had not been prematurely broken, would have commanded opinion, and regenerated the world "

Scythrop proceeded to meditate on the practicability of reviving a confederation of regenerators. To get a clear view of his own ideas, and to feel the pulse of the wisdom and genius of the age, he wrote and published a treatise, in which his meanings were carefully wrapt up in the monk's hood of transcendental technology, but filled with hints of matter deep and dangerous, which he thought would set the whole nation in a ferment, and he awaited the result in awful expectation, as a miner who has fired a train awaits the explosion of a rock. However, he listened and heard nothing, for the explosion, if any ensued, was not sufficiently loud to shake a single leaf of the ivy on the towers of Nightmare Abbey, and some months afterwards he received a letter from his bookseller, informing him that only seven copies had been sold, and concluding with a polite request for the balance.

Scythrop did not despair. "Seven copies," he thought, "have been sold. Seven is a mystical number, and the omen is good. Let me find the seven purchasers of my seven copies, and they shall be the seven golden candle-sticks with which I will illuminate the world."

Scythrop had a certain portion of mechanical genius, which his romantic projects tended to develop. He constructed models of cells and recesses, sliding panels and secret passages, that

would have baffled the skill of the Parisian police. He took the opportunity of his father's absence to smuggle a dumb carpenter into the Abbey, and between them they gave reality to one of these models in Scythrop's tower. Scythrop foresaw that a great leader of human regeneration would be involved in fearful dilemmas, and determined, for the benefit of mankind in general, to adopt all possible precautions for the preservation of himself.

The servants, even the women, had been tutored into silence. Profound stillness reigned throughout and around the Abbey, except when the occasional shutting of a door would peal in long reverberations through the galleries, or the heavy tread of the pensive butler would wake the hollow echoes of the hall. Scythrop stalked about like the grand inquisitor, and the servants flitted past him like familiars. In his evening meditations on the terrace, under the ivy of the ruined tower, the only sounds that came to his ear were the rustling of the wind in the ivy, the plaintive voices of the feathered choristers, the owls, the occasional striking of the Abbey clock, and the monotonous dash of the sea on its low and level shore. In the mean time, he drank Madeira, and laid deep schemes for a thorough repair of the crazy fabric of human nature.

Mr Glowry returned from London with the loss of his lawsuit. Justice was with him, but the law was against him. He found Scythrop in a mood most sympathetically tragic; and they vied with each other in enlivening their cups by lamenting the depravity of this degenerate age, and occasionally interspersing divers grim jokes about graves, worms, and epitaphs. Mr Glowry's friends, whom we have mentioned in the first chapter, availed themselves of his return to pay him a simultaneous visit. At the

same time arrived Scythrop's friend and fellow-collegian, the Honourable Mr Listless. Mr Glowry had discovered this fashionable young gentleman in London, "stretched on the rack of a too easy chair," and devoured with a gloomy and misanthropical *mal curo*, and had pressed him so earnestly to take the benefit of the pure country air, at Nightmare Abbey, that Mr Listless, finding it would give him more trouble to refuse than to comply, summoned his French valet, Fatout, and told him he was going to Lincolnshire. On this simple hint, Fatout went to work, and the imperials were packed, and the post-chariot was at the door, without the Honourable Mr Listless having said or thought another syllable on the subject.

Mr and Mrs Hilary brought with them an orphan niece, a daughter of Mr Glowry's youngest sister, who had made a runaway love-match with an Irish officer. The lady's fortune disappeared in the first year's love, by a natural consequence, disappeared in the second the Irishman himself, by a still more natural consequence, disappeared in the third. Mr Glowry had allowed his sister an annuity, and she had lived in retirement with her only daughter, whom, at her death, which had recently happened, she commended to the care of Mrs Hilary.

Miss Marionetta Celestina O'Carroll was a very blooming and accomplished young lady. Being a compound of the *Allegro Vivace* of the O'Carrolls, and of the *Andante Doloroso* of the Glowries, she exhibited in her own character all the diversities of an April sky. Her hair was light-brown, her eyes hazel, and sparkling with a mild but fluctuating light, her features regular, her lips full, and of equal size, and her person surpassingly graceful. She was a proficient in music. Her conversation was sprightly, but always on subjects light in their nature and limited in their interest for moral sympathies, in

any general sense, had no place in her mind. She had some coquetry, and more caprice, liking and disliking almost in the same moment, pursuing an object with earnestness while it seemed unattainable, and rejecting it when in her power as not worth the trouble of possession.

Whether she was touched with a *penchant* for her cousin Scythrop, or was merely curious to see what effect the tender passion would have on so *outré* a person, she had not been three days in the Abbey before she threw out all the lures of her beauty and accomplishments to make a prize of his heart. Scythrop proved an easy conquest. The image of Miss Emily Girouette was already sufficiently dimmed by the power of philosophy and the exercise of reason. For to these influences, or to any influence but the true one, are usually ascribed the mental cures performed by the great physician Time. Scythrop's romantic dreams had indeed given him many *pure anticipated cognitions* of combinations of beauty and intelligence, which, he had some misgivings, were not exactly realised in his cousin Marionetta, but, in spite of these misgivings, he soon became distractedly in love, which, when the young lady clearly perceived, she altered her tactics, and assumed as much coldness and reserve as she had before shown ardent and ingenuous attachment.

[*Shortly afterwards, Mr Glowry discovers that Scythrop is in love with Marionetta, and informs Mrs Hilary that he has already chosen a wife for his son*]

Mrs. Hilary hinted to Marionetta, that propriety, and delicacy, and decorum, and dignity, &c &c &c,¹ would require them to leave the Abbey immediately. Marionetta listened in silent submission, for she knew

¹ We are not masters of the whole vocabulary. See any novel by any literary lady.

that her inheritance was passive obedience ; but, when Scythrop, who had watched the opportunity of Mrs Hilary's departure, entered, and, without speaking a word, threw himself at her feet in a paroxysm of grief, the young lady, in equal silence and sorrow, threw her arms round his neck and burst into tears. A very tender scene ensued, which the sympathetic susceptibilities of the soft-hearted reader can more accurately imagine than we can delineate. But when Marionetta hinted that she was to leave the Abbey immediately, Scythrop snatched from its repository his ancestor's skull, filled it with Madeira, and presenting himself before Mr Glowry, threatened to drink off the contents if Mr. Glowry did not immediately promise that Marionetta should not be taken from the Abbey without her own consent. Mr Glowry, who took the Madeira to be some deadly brewage, gave the required promise in dismal panic. Scythrop returned to Marionetta with a joyful heart, and drank the Madeira by the way.

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Marionetta felt secure of Scythrop's heart, and notwithstanding the difficulties that surrounded her, she could not debar herself from the pleasure of tormenting her lover, whom she kept in a perpetual fever. Sometimes she would meet him with the most unqualified affection, sometimes with the most chilling indifference ; rousing him to anger by artificial coldness—softening him to love by eloquent tenderness—or inflaming him to jealousy by coquetting with the Honourable Mr. Listless, who seemed, under her magical influence, to burst into sudden life, like the bud of the evening primrose. Sometimes she would sit by the piano, and listen with becoming attention to Scythrop's pathetic remonstrances, but, in the most impassioned part of his oratory, she would convert all his ideas into a chaos, by striking up some

Rondo Allegro, and saying, "Is it not pretty?" Scythrop would begin to storm, and she would answer him with,

" Zitti, zitti, piano, piano,
Non facciamo confusione,"

or some similar *facezia*, till he would start away from her, and enclose himself in his tower, in an agony of agitation, vowing to renounce her, and her whole sex, for ever, and returning to her presence at the summons of the billet, which she never failed to send with many expressions of penitence and promises of amendment. Scythrop's schemes for regenerating the world, and detecting his seven golden candlesticks, went on very slowly in this fever of his spirit.

Things proceeded in this train for several days, and Mr Glowry began to be uneasy at receiving no intelligence from Mr. Toobad, when one evening the latter rushed into the library, where the family and the visitors were assembled, vociferating, "The devil is come among you, having great wrath!" He then drew Mr Glowry aside into another apartment, and after remaining some time together, they re-entered the library with faces of great dismay, but did not condescend to explain to any one the cause of their discomfiture.

The next morning, early, Mr. Toobad departed. Mr. Glowry sighed and groaned all day, and said not a word to any one. Scythrop had quarrelled, as usual, with Marionetta, and was enclosed in his tower, in a fit of morbid sensibility. Marionetta was comforting herself at the piano, with singing the airs of *Nina pazza per amore*; and the Honourable Mr. Listless was listening to the harmony, as he lay supine on the sofa, with a book in his hand, into which he peeped at intervals. The Reverend Mr. Larynx approached the sofa, and proposed a game at billiards,

THE HONOURABLE MR LISTLESS

Billiards ! Really I should be very happy , but, in my present exhausted state, the exertion is too much for me I do not know when I have been equal to such an effort (*He rang the bell for his valet Fatout entered*) Fatout ! when did I play at billiards last ?

FATOUT.

De fourteen December de last year, Monsieur.
(*Fatout bowed and retired*)

THE HONOURABLE MR LISTLESS.

So it was. Seven months ago. You see, Mr Larynx , you see, sir My nerves, Miss O'Carroll, my nerves are shattered I have been advised to try Bath Some of the faculty recommend Cheltenham. I think of trying both, as the seasons don't clash. The season, you know, Mr Larynx—the season, Miss O'Carroll—the season is every thing.

MARIONETTA.

And health is something. *N'est-ce pas*, Mr. Larynx ?

THE REVEREND MR LARYNX.

Most assuredly, Miss O'Carroll For, however reasoners may dispute about the *summum bonum*, none of them will deny that a very good dinner is a very good thing . and what is a good dinner without a good appetite ? and whence is a good appetite but from good health ? Now, Cheltenham, Mr. Listless, is famous for good appetites.

THE HONOURABLE MR. LISTLESS.

The best piece of logic I ever heard, Mr Larynx , the very best, I assure you. I have thought very

seriously of Cheltenham very seriously and profoundly I thought of it—let me see—when did I think of it? (*He rang again, and Fatout re-appeared*) Fatout! when did I think of going to Cheltenham, and did not go?

FATOUT

De Juillet twenty-von, de last summer, Monsieur (*Fatout retired*)

THE HONOURABLE MR LISTLESS

So it was An invaluable fellow that, Mr Larynx—invaluable, Miss O'Carroll.

MARIONETTA.

So I should judge, indeed. He seems to serve you as a walking memory, and to be a living chronicle, not of your actions only, but of your thoughts

THE HONOURABLE MR LISTLESS.

An excellent definition of the fellow, Miss O'Carroll, —excellent, upon my honour Ha! ha! he! Heigho! Laughter is pleasant, but the exertion is too much for me.

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In the evening, the whole party met, as usual, in the library. Marionetta sat at the harp, the Honourable Mr Listless sat by her and turned over her music, though the exertion was almost too much for him. The Reverend Mr Larynx relieved him occasionally in this delightful labour. Scythrop, tormented by the demon Jealousy, sat in the corner biting his lips and fingers. Marionetta looked at him every now and then with a smile of most provoking good humour, which he pretended not to see, and which only the more exasperated his troubled

spirit. He took down a volume of Dante, and pretended to be deeply interested in the *Purgatorio*, though he knew not a word he was reading, as Marionetta was well aware, who, tripping across the room, peeped into his book, and said to him, "I see you are in the middle of *Purgatory*"—"I am in the middle of hell," said Scythrop furiously. "Are you?" said she, "then come across the room, and I will sing you the finale of *Don Giovanni*"

"Let me alone," said Scythrop. Marionetta looked at him with a deprecating smile, and said, "You unjust, cross creature, you"—"Let me alone," said Scythrop, but much less emphatically than at first, and by no means wishing to be taken at his word. Marionetta left him immediately, and returning to the harp, said, just loud enough for Scythrop to hear—"Did you ever read Dante, Mr Listless?" Scythrop is reading Dante, and is just now in *Purgatory*"—"And I," said the Honourable Mr. Listless, "am not reading Dante, and am just now in *Paradise*," bowing to Marionetta.

MARIONETTA.

You are very gallant, Mr Listless, and I dare say you are very fond of reading Dante.

THE HONOURABLE MR LISTLESS.

I don't know how it is, but Dante never came in my way till lately. I never had him in my collection, and if I had had him I should not have read him. But I find he is growing fashionable, and I am afraid I must read him some wet morning.

MARIONETTA.

No, read him some evening, by all means. Were you ever in love, Mr. Listless?

THE HONOURABLE MR. LISTLESS

I assure you, Miss O'Carroll, never—till I came to Nightmare Abbey I dare say it is very pleasant, but it seems to give so much trouble that I fear the exertion would be too much for me.

MARIONETTA.

Shall I teach you a compendious method of courtship, that will give you no trouble whatever?

THE HONOURABLE MR. LISTLESS.

You will confer on me an inexpressible obligation. I am all impatience to learn it.

MARIONETTA

Sit with your back to the lady and read Dante, only be sure to begin in the middle, and turn over three or four pages at once—backwards as well as forwards, and she will immediately perceive that you are desperately in love with her—desperately

(The Honourable Mr Listless sitting between Scythrop and Marionetta, and fixing all his attention on the beautiful speaker, did not observe Scythrop, who was doing as she described.)

THE HONOURABLE MR. LISTLESS.

You are pleased to be facetious, Miss O'Carroll. The lady would infallibly conclude that I was the greatest brute in town.

MARIONETTA.

Far from it. She would say, perhaps, some people have odd methods of showing their affection.

[After some further conversation, Mr. Listless asks Marionetta for more music.]

All were silent, and Marionetta sung :—

Why are thy looks so blank, grey friar ?
 Why are thy looks so blue ?
 Thou seem'st more pale and lank, grey friar,
 Than thou wast used to do —
 Say, what has made thee rue ?

Thy form was plump, and a light did shine
 In thy round and ruby face,
 Which showed an outward visible sign
 Of an inward spiritual grace —
 Say, what has changed thy case ?

Yet will I tell thee true, grey friar,
 I very well can see,
 That, if thy looks are blue, grey friar,
 'Tis all for love of me,—
 'Tis all for love of me

But breathe not thy vows to me, grey friar,
 Oh, breathe them not, I pray,
 For ill beseems in a reverend friar,
 The love of a mortal may,
 And I needs must say thee nay

But, could'st thou think my heart to move
 With that pale and silent scowl ?
 Know, he who would win a maiden's love,
 Whether clad in cap or cowl,
 Must be more of a lark than an owl

Scythrop immediately replaced Dante on the shelf, and joined the circle round the beautiful singer. Marionetta gave him a smile of approbation that fully restored his complacency, and they continued on the best possible terms during the remainder of the evening. The Honourable Mr. Listless turned over the leaves with double alacrity, saying, " You are severe upon invalids, Miss O'Carroll. to escape

your satire, I must try to be sprightly, though the exertion is too much for me."

[In a subsequent chapter Mr Cypress (Byron) makes his appearance]

Scythrop, attending one day the summons to dinner, found in the drawing-room his friend Mr Cypress the poet, whom he had known at college, and who was a great favourite of Mr Glowry. Mr Cypress said, he was on the point of leaving England, but could not think of doing so without a farewell-look at Nightmare Abbey and his respected friends, the moody Mr. Glowry and the mysterious Mr Scythrop, the sublime Mr Flosky and the pathetic Mr Listless, to all of whom, and the morbid hospitality of the melancholy dwelling in which they were then assembled, he assured them he should always look back with as much affection as his lacerated spirit could feel for any thing. The sympathetic condolence of their respective replies was cut short by Raven's announcement of "dinner on table."

The conversation that took place when the wine was in circulation, and the ladies were withdrawn, we shall report with our usual scrupulous fidelity.

MR. GLOWRY.

You are leaving England, Mr Cypress. There is a delightful melancholy in saying farewell to an old acquaintance, when the chances are twenty to one against ever meeting again. A smiling bumper to a sad parting, and let us all be unhappy together.

MR. CYPRESS (*filling a bumper*)

This is the only social habit that the disappointed spirit never unlearns.

THE REVEREND MR LARYNX (*filling*).

It is the only piece of academical learning that the finished educatee retains

MR FLOSKY (*filling*)

It is the only objective fact which the sceptic can realise.

SCYTHROP (*filling*).

It is the only styptic for a bleeding heart.

THE HONOURABLE MR LISTLESS (*filling*)

It is the only trouble that is very well worth taking.

MR. ASTERIAS (*filling*).

It is the only key of conversational truth.

MR TOOBAD (*filling*).

It is the only antidote to the great wrath of the devil.

MR. HILARY (*filling*).

It is the only symbol of perfect life. The inscription "HIC NON BIBITUR" will suit nothing but a tombstone.

MR GLOWRY.

You will see many fine old ruins, Mr. Cypress, crumbling pillars, and mossy walls—many a one-legged Venus and headless Minerva—many a Neptune buried in sand—many a Jupiter turned topsy-turvy—many a perforated Bacchus doing duty as a water-pipe—many reminiscences of the ancient world, which I hope was better worth living in than the modern, though, for myself, I care not a straw more for one than the other, and would not go twenty miles to see any thing that either could show

MR CYPRESS

It is something to seek, Mr. Glowry. The mind is restless, and must persist in seeking, though to find is to be disappointed. Do you feel no aspirations towards the countries of Socrates and Cicero? No wish to wander among the venerable remains of the greatness that has passed for ever?

MR. GLOWRY

Not a grain.

SCYTHROP

It is, indeed, much the same as if a lover should dig up the buried form of his mistress, and gaze upon relics which are any thing but herself, to wander among a few mouldy ruins, that are only imperfect indexes to lost volumes of glory, and meet at every step the more melancholy ruins of human nature—a degenerate race of stupid and shrivelled slaves, grovelling in the lowest depths of servility and superstition.

THE HONOURABLE MR. LISTLESS

It is the fashion to go abroad. I have thought of it myself, but am hardly equal to the exertion. To be sure, a little eccentricity and originality are allowable in some cases, and the most eccentric and original of all characters is an Englishman who stays at home.

SCYTHROP

I should have no pleasure in visiting countries that are past all hope of regeneration. There is great hope of our own, and it seems to me that an Englishman, who, either by his station in society, or by his genius, or (as in your instance, Mr Cypress,) by both, has the power of essentially serving his country in its arduous struggle with its domestic enemies, yet

forsakes his country, which is still so rich in hope, to dwell in others which are only fertile in the runs of memory, does what none of those ancients, whose fragmentary memorials you venerate, would have done in similar circumstances.

MR CYPRESS.

Sir, I have quarrelled with my wife, and a man who has quarrelled with his wife is absolved from all duty to his country. I have written an ode to tell the people as much, and they may take it as they list.

SCYTHROP.

Do you suppose, if Brutus had quarrelled with his wife, he would have given it as a reason to Cassius for having nothing to do with his enterprise? Or would Cassius have been satisfied with such an excuse?

MR. FLOSKY.

Brutus was a senator, so is our dear friend: but the cases are different. Brutus had some hope of political good. Mr Cypress has none. How should he, after what we have seen in France?

SCYTHROP

A Frenchman is born in harness, ready saddled, bitted, and bridled, for any tyrant to ride. He will fawn under his rider one moment, and throw him and kick him to death the next, but another adventurer springs on his back, and by dint of whip and spur on he goes as before. We may, without much vanity, hope better of ourselves.

MR. CYPRESS.

I have no hope for myself or for others. Our life is a false nature, it is not in the harmony of things,

it is an all-blasting upas, whose root is earth, and whose leaves are the skies which rain their poison-dews upon mankind. We wither from our youth, we gasp with unslaked thirst for unattainable good; lured from the first to the last by phantoms—love, fame, ambition, avarice—all idle, and all ill—one meteor of many names, that vanishes in the smoke of death.¹

MR FLOSKY.

A most delightful speech, Mr Cypress. A most amiable and instructive philosophy. You have only to impress its truth on the minds of all living men, and life will then, indeed, be the desert and the solitude, and I must do you, myself, and our mutual friends, the justice to observe, that let society only give fair play at one and the same time, as I flatter myself it is inclined to do, to your system of morals, and my system of metaphysics, and Scythrop's system of politics, and Mr. Listless's system of manners, and Mr. Toobad's system of religion, and the result will be as fine a mental chaos as even the immortal Kant himself could ever have hoped to see, in the prospect of which I rejoice.

MR HILARY

"Certainly, ancient, it is not a thing to rejoice at." I am one of those who cannot see the good that is to result from all this mystifying and blue-devilling of society. The contrast it presents to the cheerful and solid wisdom of antiquity is too forcible not to strike any one who has the least knowledge of classical literature. To represent vice and misery as the necessary accompaniments of genius, is as mischievous as it is false, and the feeling is as unclassical as the language in which it is usually expressed.

¹ *Childe Harold*, canto 4 cxxiv cxxvi

MR. TOOBAD.

It is our calamity The devil has come among us, and has begun by taking possession of all the cleverest fellows. Yet, forsooth, this is the enlightened age Marry, how? Did our ancestors go peeping about with dark lanterns, and do we walk at our ease in broad sunshine? Where is the manifestation of our light? By what symptoms do you recognise it? What are its signs, its tokens, its symptoms, its symbols, its categories, its conditions? What is it, and why? How, where, when is it to be seen, felt, and understood? What do we see by it which our ancestors saw not, and which at the same time is worth seeing? We see a hundred men hanged, where they saw one We see five hundred transported, where they saw one We see five thousand in the workhouse, where they saw one We see scores of Bible Societies, where they saw none. We see paper, where they saw gold We see men in stays, where they saw men in armour We see painted faces, where they saw healthy ones. We see children perishing in manufactories, where they saw them flourishing in the fields. We see prisons, where they saw castles We see masters, where they saw representatives In short they saw true men, where we see false knaves They saw Milton, and we see Mr. Sackbut.

MR. FLOSKY.

The false knave, sir, is my honest friend, therefore, I beseech you, let him be countenanced God forbid but a knave should have some countenance at his friend's request.

MR TOOBAD.

"Good men and true" was their common term, like the *καλὸς κἀγαθὸς* of the Athenians It is

so long since men have been either good or true, that it is to be questioned which is most obsolete, the fact or the phraseology.

MR. CYPRESS.

There is no worth nor beauty but in the mind's idea. Love sows the wind and reaps the whirlwind.¹ Confusion, thrice confounded, is the portion of him who rests even for an instant on that most brittle of reeds—the affection of a human being. The sum of our social destiny is to inflict or to endure.²

MR. HILARY.

Rather to bear and forbear, Mr. Cypress—a maxim which you perhaps despise. Ideal beauty is not the mind's creation: it is real beauty, refined and purified in the mind's alembic, from the alloy which always more or less accompanies it in our mixed and imperfect nature. But still the gold exists in a very ample degree. To expect too much is a disease in the expectant, for which human nature is not responsible, and, in the common name of humanity, I protest against these false and mischievous ravings. To rail against humanity for not being abstract perfection, and against human love for not realising all the splendid visions of the poets of chivalry, is to rail at the summer for not being all sunshine, and at the rose for not being always in bloom.

MR. CYPRESS

Human love! Love is not an inhabitant of the earth. We worship him as the Athenians did their unknown God—but broken hearts are the martyrs of his faith, and the eye shall never see the form which phantasy paints, and which passion pursues

¹ *Childe Harold*, canto 4 cxxiii

² *Ibid.* canto 3. lxxi.

through paths of delusive beauty, among flowers whose odours are agonies, and trees whose gums are poison.¹

MR HILARY

You talk like a Rosicrusian, who will love nothing but a sylph, who does not believe in the existence of a sylph, and who yet quarrels with the whole universe for not containing a sylph.

MR CYPRESS.

The mind is diseased of its own beauty, and fevers into false creation. The forms which the sculptor's soul has seized exist only in himself.²

MR FLOSKY.

Permit me to discept. They are the mediums of common forms combined and arranged into a common standard. The ideal beauty of the Helen of Zeuxis was the combined medium of the real beauty of the virgins of Crotona.

MR HILARY.

But to make ideal beauty the shadow in the water, and, like the dog in the fable, to throw away the substance in catching at the shadow, is scarcely the characteristic of wisdom, whatever it may be of genius. To reconcile man as he is to the world as it is, to preserve and improve all that is good, and destroy or alleviate all that is evil, in physical and moral nature—have been the hope and aim of the greatest teachers and ornaments of our species. I will say, too, that the highest wisdom and the highest genius have been invariably accompanied with cheerfulness. We have sufficient proofs on record that Shakespeare and Socrates were the most festive

¹ *Childe Harold*, canto 4 cxxi cxxxvi ² *Ibid* canto 4 cxxi

of companions. But now the little wisdom and genius we have seem to be entering into a conspiracy against cheerfulness.

MR TOOBAD

How can we be cheerful with the devil among us ?

THE HONOURABLE MR LISTLESS

How can we be cheerful when our nerves are shattered ?

MR FLOSKY

How can we be cheerful when we are surrounded by a *reading public*, that is growing too wise for its betters ?

SCYTHROP.

How can we be cheerful when our great general designs are crossed every moment by our little particular passions ?

MR. CYPRESS

How can we be cheerful in the midst of disappointment and despair ?

MR GLOWRY

Let us all be unhappy together.

MR HILARY

Let us sing a catch.

MR. GLOWRY.

No : a nice tragical ballad. The Norfolk Tragedy to the tune of the Hundredth Psalm.

MR. HILARY.

I say a catch.

MR GLOWRY.

I say no. A song from Mr. Cypress.

ALL

A song from Mr Cypress

MR CYPRESS *sung*—

There is a fever of the spirit,
 The brand of Cain's unresting doom,
 Which in the lone dark souls that bear it
 Glows like the lamp in Tullia's tomb
 Unlike that lamp, its subtle fire
 Burns, blasts, consumes its cell, the heart,
 Till, one by one, hope, joy, desire,
 Like dreams of shadowy smoke depart

When hope, love, life itself, are only
 Dust—spectral memories—dead and cold—
 The unfed fire burns bright and lonely,
 Like that undying lamp of old
 And by that drear illumination,
 Till time its clay-built home has rent,
 Thought broods on feeling's desolation—
 The soul is its own monument

MR. GLOWRY

Admirable. Let us all be unhappy together.

MR. HILARY.

Now, I say again, a catch

THE REVEREND MR. LARYNX.

I am for you.

MR HILARY.

"Seamen three."

THE REVEREND MR. LARYNX.

Agreed. I'll be Harry Gill, with the voice of three.
 Begin.

MR. HILARY AND THE REVEREND MR. LARYNX.

Seamen three ! What men be ye ?
 Gotham's three wise men we be
 Whither in your bowl so free ?
 To rake the moon from out the sea
 The bowl goes trim The moon doth shine
 And our ballast is old wine ,
 And your ballast is old wine

Who art thou, so fast adrift ?
 I am he they call Old Care
 Here on board we will thee lift.
 No I may not enter there
 Wherefore so ? 'Tis Jove's decree,
 In a bowl Care may not be ,
 In a bowl Care may not be

Fear ye not the waves that roll ?
 No in charmed bowl we swim.
 What the charm that floats the bowl ?
 Water may not pass the brim
 The bowl goes trim The moon doth shine
 And our ballast is old wine ,
 And your ballast is old wine

This catch was so well executed by the spirit and science of Mr Hilary, and the deep tri-une voice of the reverend gentleman, that the whole party, in spite of themselves, caught the contagion, and joined in chorus at the conclusion, each raising a bumper to his lips

The bowl goes trim the moon doth shine
 And our ballast is old wine

Mr Cypress, having his ballast on board, stepped, the same evening, into his bowl, or travelling chariot, and departed to rake seas and rivers, lakes and canals, for the moon of ideal beauty.

[Scrythrop, in love at the same time with Marionetta and Celinda (Miss Toobad), hesitates between them until they both renounce him]

Scythrop knew not what to do. He could not attempt to conciliate the one without irreparably offending the other ; and he was so fond of both, that the idea of depriving himself for ever of the society of either was intolerable to him : he therefore retreated into his strong hold, mystery ; maintained an impenetrable silence , and contented himself with stealing occasionally a deprecating glance at each of the objects of his idolatry. Mr Toobad and Mr. Hilary, in the mean time, were each insisting on an explanation from Mr Glowry, who they thought had been playing a double game on this occasion. Mr Glowry was vainly endeavouring to persuade them of his innocence in the whole transaction. Mrs. Hilary was endeavouring to mediate between her husband and brother. The Honourable Mr. Listless, the Reverend Mr. Larynx, Mr. Flosky, Mr. Asterias, and Aquarius, were attracted by the tumult to the scene of action, and were appealed to severally and conjointly by the respective disputants. Multitudinous questions, and answers *en masse*, composed a *charivari*, to which the genius of Rossini alone could have given a suitable accompaniment, and which was only terminated by Mrs Hilary and Mr. Toobad retreating with the captive damsels. The whole party followed, with the exception of Scythrop, who threw himself into his arm-chair, crossed his left foot over his right knee, placed the hollow of his left hand on the interior angle of his left leg, rested his right elbow on the elbow of the chair, placed the ball of his right thumb against his right temple, curved the forefinger along the upper part of his forehead, rested the point of the middle finger on the bridge of his nose, and the points of the two others on the lower part of the palm, fixed his eyes intently on the veins in the back of his left hand, and sat in this position like the immoveable Theseus, who, as is well known to many who have not been at college, and to some

few who have, *sedet, æternumque sedebit* ¹ We hope the admirers of the *minutiae* in poetry and romance will appreciate this accurate description of a pensive attitude

Scythrop was still in this position when Raven entered to announce that dinner was on table.

"I cannot come," said Scythrop

Raven sighed. "Something is the matter," said Raven. "but man is born to trouble"

"Leave me," said Scythrop "go, and croak elsewhere"

"Thus it is," said Raven "Five-and-twenty years have I lived in Nightmare Abbey, and now all the reward of my affection is—Go, and croak elsewhere. I have danced you on my knee, and fed you with marrow."

"Good Raven," said Scythrop, "I entreat you to leave me"

"Shall I bring your dinner here?" said Raven. "A boiled fowl and a glass of Madeira are prescribed by the faculty in cases of low spirits. But you had better join the party it is very much reduced already."

"Reduced! how?"

"The Honourable Mr Listless is gone. He declared that, what with family quarrels in the morning, and ghosts at night, he could get neither sleep nor peace, and that the agitation was too much for his nerves though Mr Glowry assured him that the ghost was only poor Crow walking in his sleep, and that the shroud and bloody turban were a sheet and a red nightcap."

"Well, sir?"

"The Reverend Mr. Larynx has been called off on duty, to marry or bury (I don't know which) some

¹ Sits, and will sit for ever

unfortunate person or persons, at Claydyke but man is born to trouble ! ”

“ Is that all ? ”

“ No Mr Toobad is gone too, and a strange lady with him.”

“ Gone ! ”

“ Gone. And Mr. and Mrs Hilary, and Miss O’Carroll. they are all gone. There is nobody left but Mr Asterias and his son, and they are going to-night ”

“ Then I have lost them both.”

“ Won’t you come to dinner ? ”

“ No.”

“ Shall I bring your dinner here ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ What will you have ? ”

“ A pint of port and a pistol ”¹

“ A pistol ! ”

“ And a pint of port. I will make my exit like Werter Go. Stay. Did Miss O’Carroll say any thing ? ”

“ No ”

“ Did Miss Toobad say any thing ? ”

“ The strange lady ? No.”

“ Did either of them cry ? ”

“ No ”

“ What did they do ? ”

“ Nothing.”

“ What did Mr Toobad say ? ”

“ He said, fifty times over, the devil was come among us ”

“ And they are gone ? ”

“ Yes , and the dinner is getting cold. There is a time for every thing under the sun. You may as well dine first, and be miserable afterwards ”

“ True, Raven There is something in that. I will take your advice . therefore, bring me——”

¹ See *The Sorrows of Werter*, Letter 93.

"The port and the pistol?"

"No, the boiled fowl and Madeira."

Scythrop had dined, and was sipping his Madeira alone, immersed in melancholy musing, when Mr. Glowry entered, followed by Raven, who, having placed an additional glass and set a chair for Mr. Glowry, withdrew. Mr. Glowry sat down opposite Scythrop. After a pause, during which each filled and drank in silence, Mr. Glowry said, "So, sir, you have played your cards well. I proposed Miss Toobad to you; you refused her. Mr. Toobad proposed you to her; she refused you. You fell in love with Marionetta, and were going to poison yourself, because, from pure fatherly regard to your temporal interests, I withheld my consent. When, at length, I offered you my consent, you told me I was too precipitate. And, after all, I find you and Miss Toobad living together in the same tower, and behaving in every respect like two plighted lovers. Now, sir, if there be any rational solution of all this absurdity, I shall be very much obliged to you for a small glimmering of information."

"The solution, sir, is of little moment, but I will leave it in writing for your satisfaction. The crisis of my fate is come—the world is a stage, and my direction is *exit*."

"Do not talk so, sir,—do not talk so, Scythrop. What would you have?"

"I would have my love."

"And pray, sir, who is your love?"

"Celinda—Marionetta—either—both."

"Both! That may do very well in a German tragedy, and the Great Mogul might have found it very feasible in his lodgings at Kensington, but it will not do in Lincolnshire. Will you have Miss Toobad?"

"Yes."

"And renounce Marionetta?"

"No"

"But you must renounce one."

"I cannot."

"And you cannot have both. What is to be done?"

"I must shoot myself"

"Don't talk so, Scythrop Be rational, my dear Scythrop Consider, and make a cool, calm choice, and I will exert myself in your behalf."

"Why should I choose, sir? Both have renounced *me* I have no hope of either"

"Tell me which you will have, and I will plead your cause irresistibly"

"Well, sir—I will have—no, sir, I cannot renounce either I cannot choose either. I am doomed to be the victim of eternal disappointments, and I have no resource but a pistol"

"Scythrop—Scythrop,—if one of them should come to you—what then?"

"That, sir, might alter the case but that cannot be"

"It can be, Scythrop, it will be I promise you it will be Have but a little patience—but a week's patience, and it shall be"

"A week, sir, is an age but, to oblige you, as a last act of filial duty, I will live another week. It is now Thursday evening, twenty-five minutes past seven At this hour and minute, on Thursday next, love and fate shall smile on me, or I will drink my last pint of port in this world"

Mr Glowry ordered his travelling chariot, and departed from the abbey.

The day after Mr Glowry's departure was one of incessant rain, and Scythrop repented of the promise he had given The next day was one of bright sunshine he sat on the terrace, read a tragedy of Sophocles, and was not sorry, when Raven announced

dinner, to find himself alive On the third evening, the wind blew, and the rain beat, and the owl flapped against his windows, and he put a new flint in his pistol On the fourth day, the sun shone again, and he locked the pistol up in a drawer, where he left it undisturbed, till the morning of the eventful Thursday, when he ascended the turret with a telescope, and spied anxiously along the road that crossed the fens from Claydyke but nothing appeared on it He watched in this manner from ten A.M. till Raven summoned him to dinner at five, when he stationed Crow at the telescope, and descended to his own funeral-feast. He left open the communications between the tower and turret, and called aloud at intervals to Crow,—“Crow, Crow, is any thing coming?” Crow answered, “The wind blows, and the windmills turn, but I see nothing coming,” and, at every answer, Scythrop found the necessity of raising his spirits with a bumper After dinner, he gave Raven his watch to set by the abbey clock Raven brought it, Scythrop placed it on the table, and Raven departed Scythrop called again to Crow, and Crow, who had fallen asleep, answered mechanically, “I see nothing coming.” Scythrop laid his pistol between his watch and his bottle The hour-hand passed the VII—the minute-hand moved on,—it was within three minutes of the appointed time Scythrop called again to Crow: Crow answered as before. Scythrop rang the bell Raven appeared.

“Raven,” said Scythrop, “the clock is too fast”

“No, indeed,” said Raven, who knew nothing of Scythrop’s intentions, “if any thing, it is too slow.”

“Villain!” said Scythrop, pointing the pistol at him, “it is too fast”

“Yes—yes—too fast, I meant,” said Raven, in manifest fear

“How much too fast?” said Scythrop

"As much as you please," said Raven

"How much, I say?" said Scythrop, pointing the pistol again.

"An hour, a full hour, sir," said the terrified butler.

"Put back my watch," said Scythrop.

Raven, with trembling hand, was putting back the watch, when the rattle of wheels was heard in the court, and Scythrop, springing down the stairs by three steps together, was at the door in sufficient time to have handed either of the young ladies from the carriage, if she had happened to be in it, but Mr Glowry was alone

"I rejoice to see you," said Mr Glowry, "I was fearful of being too late, for I waited till the last moment in the hope of accomplishing my promise, but all my endeavours have been vain, as these letters will show"

Scythrop impatiently broke the seals The contents were these —

"Almost a stranger in England, I fled from parental tyranny, and the dread of an arbitrary marriage, to the protection of a stranger and a philosopher, whom I expected to find something better than, or at least something different from, the rest of his worthless species Could I, after what has occurred, have expected nothing more from you than the common-place impertinence of sending your father to treat with me, and with mine, for me? I should be a little moved in your favour, if I could believe you capable of carrying into effect the resolutions which your father says you have taken, in the event of my proving inflexible, though I doubt not you will execute them, as far as relates to the pint of wine, twice over, at least. I wish you much happiness with Miss O'Carroll. I shall always cherish a grateful recollection of Nightmare Abbey,

for having been the means of introducing me to a true transcendentalist, and, though he is a little older than myself, which is all one in Germany, I shall very soon have the pleasure of subscribing myself

“CELINDA FLOSKY.”

“I hope, my dear cousin, that you will not be angry with me, but that you will always think of me as a sincere friend, who will always feel interested in your welfare, I am sure you love Miss Toobad much better than me, and I wish you much happiness with her. Mr Listless assures me that people do not kill themselves for love now-a-days, though it is still the fashion to talk about it. I shall, in a very short time, change my name and situation, and shall always be happy to see you in Berkeley Square, when, to the unalterable designation of your affectionate cousin, I shall subjoin the signature of

“MARIONETTA LISTLESS.”

Scythrop tore both the letters to atoms, and railed in good set terms against the fickleness of women.

“Calm yourself, my dear Scythrop,” said Mr Glowry, “there are yet maidens in England”

“Very true, sir,” said Scythrop.

“And the next time,” said Mr Glowry, “have but one string to your bow”

“Very good advice, sir,” said Scythrop.

“And, besides,” said Mr Glowry, “the fatal time is past, for it is now almost eight”

“Then that villan, Raven,” said Scythrop, “deceived me when he said that the clock was too fast, but, as you observe very justly, the time has gone by, and I have just reflected that these repeated crosses in love qualify me to take a very advanced degree in misanthropy, and there is, therefore, good hope that I may make a figure in the world

But I shall ring for the rascal Raven, and admonish him "

Raven appeared. Scythrop looked at him very fiercely two or three minutes, and Raven, still remembering the pistol, stood quaking in mute apprehension, till Scythrop, pointing significantly towards the dining-room, said, "Bring some Madeira "

MAID MARIAN

[*Peacock's fourth novel opens as follows*]

"THE abbot, in his alb arrayed," stood at the altar in the abbey-chapel of Rubygill, with all his plump, sleek, rosy friars, in goodly lines disposed, to solemnise the nuptials of the beautiful Matilda Fitzwater, daughter of the Baron of Arlingford, with the noble Robert Fitz-Ooth, Earl of Locksley and Huntingdon. The abbey of Rubygill stood in a picturesque valley, at a little distance from the western boundary of Sherwood Forest, in a spot which seemed adapted by nature to be the retreat of monastic mortification, being on the banks of a fine trout-stream, and in the midst of woodland coverts, abounding with excellent game. The bride, with her father and attendant maidens, entered the chapel, but the earl had not arrived. The baron was amazed, and the bridemaids were disconcerted. Matilda feared that some evil had befallen her lover, but felt no diminution of her confidence in his honour and love. Through the open gates of the chapel she looked down the narrow road that wound along the side of the hill, and her ear was the first that heard the distant trampling of horses, and her eye was the first that caught the glitter of snowy plumes, and the light of polished spears. "It is strange," thought the baron, "that the earl should come in this martial array to his wedding," but he had not long to meditate on the phenomenon, for the foaming steeds swept up to the gate like a whirlwind, and the earl, breathless with speed, and followed by a few of his yeomen, advanced to his smiling bride. It was then no time to ask questions, for the organ was in full peal, and the choristers were in full voice.

The abbot began to intone the ceremony in a style of modulation impressively exalted, his voice issuing most canonically from the roof of his mouth, through the medium of a very musical nose newly tuned for the occasion. But he had not proceeded far enough to exhibit all the variety and compass of this melodious instrument, when a noise was heard at the gate, and a party of armed men entered the chapel. The song of the choristers died away in a shake of demisemiquavers, contrary to all the rules of psalmody. The organ-blower, who was working his musical air-pump with one hand, and with two fingers and a thumb of the other insinuating a peeping-place through the curtain of the organ-gallery, was struck motionless by the double operation of curiosity and fear, while the organist, intent only on his performance, and spreading all his fingers to strike a swell of magnificent chords, felt his harmonic spirit ready to desert his body on being answered by the ghastly rattle of empty keys, and in the consequent *agitato furioso* of the internal movements of his feelings, was preparing to restore harmony by the *segue subito* of an *appoggiatura con foco* with the corner of a book of anthems on the head of his neglectful assistant, when his hand and his attention together were arrested by the scene below. The voice of the abbot subsided into silence through a descending scale of long-drawn melody, like the sound of the ebbing sea to the explorers of a cave. In a few moments all was silence, interrupted only by the iron tread of the armed intruders, as it rang on the marble floor and echoed from the vaulted aisles.

The leader strode up to the altar, and placing himself opposite to the abbot, and between the earl and Matilda, in such a manner that the four together seemed to stand on the four points of a diamond, exclaimed, "In the name of King Henry, I forbid the ceremony, and attach Robert Earl of Huntingdon

as a traitor ! " and at the same time he held his drawn sword between the lovers, as if to emblem that royal authority which laid its temporal ban upon their contract. The earl drew his own sword instantly, and struck down the interposing weapon, then clasped his left arm round Matilda, who sprang into his embrace, and held his sword before her with his right hand. His yeomen ranged themselves at his side, and stood with their swords drawn, still and prepared, like men determined to die in his defence. The soldiers, confident in superiority of numbers, paused. The abbot took advantage of the pause to introduce a word of exhortation. " My children," said he, " if you are going to cut each other's throats, I entreat you, in the name of peace and charity, to do it out of the chapel "

" Sweet Matilda," said the earl, " did you give your love to the Earl of Huntingdon, whose lands touch the Ouse and the Trent, or to Robert Fitz-Ooth, the son of his mother ? "

" Neither to the earl nor his earldom," answered Matilda firmly, " but to Robert Fitz-Ooth and his love "

" That I well knew," said the earl, " and though the ceremony be incomplete, we are not the less married in the eye of my only saint, our Lady, who will yet bring us together. Lord Fitzwater, to your care, for the present, I commit your daughter — Nay, sweet Matilda, part we must for a while ; but we will soon meet under brighter skies, and be this the seal of our faith "

He kissed Matilda's lips, and consigned her to the baron, who glowered about him with an expression of countenance that showed he was mortally wroth with somebody, but whatever he thought or felt he kept to himself. The earl, with a sign to his followers, made a sudden charge on the soldiers, with the intention of cutting his way through. The soldiers were prepared for such an occurrence, and

a desperate skirmish succeeded. Some of the women screamed, but none of them fainted, for fainting was not so much the fashion in those days, when the ladies breakfasted on brawn and ale at sunrise, as in our more refined age of green tea and muffins at noon. Matilda seemed disposed to fly again to her lover, but the baron forced her from the chapel. The earl's bowmen at the door sent in among the assailants a volley of arrows, one of which whizzed past the ear of the abbot, who, in mortal fear of being suddenly translated from a ghostly friar into a friarly ghost, began to roll out of the chapel as fast as his bulk and his holy robes would permit, roaring "Sacrilege!" with all his monks at his heels, who were, like himself, more intent to go at once than to stand upon the order of their going. The abbot, thus pressed from behind, and stumbling over his own drapery before, fell suddenly prostrate in the door-way that connected the chapel with the abbey, and was instantaneously buried under a pyramid of ghostly carcasses, that fell over him and each other, and lay a rolling chaos of animated rotundities, sprawling and bawling in unseemly disarray, and sending forth the names of all the saints in and out of heaven, amidst the clashing of swords, the ringing of bucklers, the clattering of helmets, the twanging of bow-strings, the whizzing of arrows, the screams of women, the shouts of the warriors, and the vociferations of the peasantry, who had been assembled to the intended nuptials, and who, seeing a fair set-to, contrived to pick a quarrel among themselves on the occasion, and proceeded, with staff and cudgel, to crack each other's skulls for the good of the king and the earl. One tall friar alone was untouched by the panic of his brethren, and stood steadfastly watching the combat with his arms a-kembo, the colossal emblem of an unarmed neutrality.

At length, through the midst of the internal

confusion, the earl, by the help of his good sword, the staunch valour of his men, and the blessing of the Virgin, fought his way to the chapel-gate—his bowmen closed him in—he vaulted into his saddle, clapped spurs to his horse, rallied his men on the first eminence, and exchanged his sword for a bow and arrow, with which he did old execution among the pursuers, who at last thought it most expedient to desist from offensive warfare, and to retreat into the abbey, where, in the king's name, they broached a pipe of the best wine, and attached all the venison in the larder, having first carefully unpacked the tuft of friars, and set the fallen abbot on his legs

The friars, it may be well supposed, and such of the king's men as escaped unhurt from the affray, found their spirits a cup too low, and kept the flask moving from noon till night. The peaceful brethren, unused to the tumult of war, had undergone, from fear and discomposure, an exhaustion of animal spirits that required extraordinary refection. During the repast, they interrogated Sir Ralph Montfaucon, the leader of the soldiers, respecting the nature of the earl's offence

"A complication of offences," replied Sir Ralph, "superinduced on the original basis of forest-treason. He began with hunting the king's deer, in despite of all remonstrance, followed it up by contempt of the king's mandates, and by armed resistance to his power, in defiance of all authority, and combined with it the resolute withholding of payment of certain moneys to the abbot of Doncaster, in denial of all law, and has thus made himself the declared enemy of church and state, and all for being too fond of venison." And the knight helped himself to half a pasty.

"A heinous offender," said a little round oily friar, appropriating the portion of pasty which Sir Ralph had left

"The earl is a worthy peer," said the tall friar,

whom we have already mentioned in the chapel scene, "and the best marksman in England"

"Why this is flat treason, brother Michael," said the little round friar, "to call an attainted traitor a worthy peer"

"I pledge you," said brother Michael. The little friar smiled and filled his cup. "He will draw the long bow," pursued brother Michael, "with any bold yeoman among them all"

"Don't talk of the long bow," said the abbot, who had the sound of the arrow still whizzing in his ear. "what have we pillars of the faith to do with the long bow?"

"Be that as it may," said Sir Ralph, "he is an outlaw from this moment"

"So much the worse for the law then," said brother Michael. "The law will have a heavier miss of him than he will have of the law. He will strike as much venison as ever, and more of other game. I know what I say; but *basta*: Let us drink"

"What other game?" said the little friar. "I hope he won't poach among our partridges"

"Poach! not he," said brother Michael. "if he wants your partridges, he will strike them under your nose (here's to you), and drag your trout-stream for you on a Thursday evening"

"Monstrous! and starve us on fast-day," said the little friar

"But that is not the game I mean," said brother Michael.

"Surely, son Michael," said the abbot, "you do not mean to insinuate that the noble earl will turn freebooter?"

"A man must live," said brother Michael, "earl or no. If the law takes his rents and beeves without his consent, he must take beeves and rents where he can get them without the consent of the law. This is the *lex talionis*."

"Truly," said Sir Ralph, "I am sorry for the damsel · she seems fond of this wild runagate."

"A mad girl, a mad girl," said the little friar.

"How a mad girl?" said brother Michael "Has she not beauty, grace, wit, sense, discretion, dexterity, learning, and valour?"

"Learning!" exclaimed the little friar, "what has a woman to do with learning? And valour! who ever heard a woman commended for valour? Meekness and mildness, and softness, and gentleness, and tenderness, and humility, and obedience to her husband, and faith in her confessor, and domesticity, or, as learned doctors call it, the faculty of stay-at-homeliness, and embroidery, and music, and pickling, and preserving, and the whole complex and multiplex detail of the noble science of dinner, as well in preparation for the table, as in arrangement over it, and in distribution around it to knights, and squires, and ghostly friars,—these are female virtues · but valour—why who ever heard——?"

"She is the all in all," said brother Michael, "gentle as a ring-dove, yet high-soaring as a falcon: humble below her deserving, yet deserving beyond the estimate of panegyric. an exact economist in all superfluity, yet a most bountiful dispenser in all liberality the chief regulator of her household, the fairest pillar of her hall, and the sweetest blossom of her bower · having, in all opposite proposings, sense to understand, judgment to weigh, discretion to choose, firmness to undertake, diligence to conduct, perseverance to accomplish, and resolution to maintain. For obedience to her husband, that is not to be tried till she has one. for faith in her confessor, she has as much as the law prescribes: for embroidery an Arachne for music a Siren: and for pickling and preserving, did not one of her jars of sugared apricots give you your last surfeit at Arlingford Castle?"

"Call you that preserving?" said the little friar, "I call it destroying. Call you it pickling? Truly it pickled me. My life was saved by miracle."

"By canary," said brother Michael. "Canary is the only life preserver, the true *aurum potabile*, the universal panacea for all diseases, thirst, and short life. Your life was saved by canary."

"Indeed, reverend father," said Sir Ralph, "if the young lady be half what you describe, she must be a paragon: but your commending her for valour does somewhat amaze me."

"She can fence," said the little friar, "and draw the long bow, and play at single-stick and quarter-staff."

"Yet mark you," said brother Michael, "not like a virago or a hoyden, or one that would crack a serving-man's head for spilling gravy on her ruff, but with such womanly grace and temperate self-command as if those manly exercises belonged to her only, and were become for her sake feminine."

"You incite me," said Sir Ralph, "to view her more nearly. That madcap earl found me other employment than to remark her in the chapel."

"The earl is a worthy peer," said brother Michael, "he is worth any fourteen earls on this side Trent, and any seven on the other." (The reader will please to remember that Rubygill Abbey was *north* of Trent.)

"His mettle will be tried," said Sir Ralph. "There is many a courtier will swear to King Henry to bring him in dead or alive."

"They must look to the brambles then," said brother Michael.

"The bramble, the bramble, the bonny forest bramble,
Doth make a jest
Of silken vest,
That will through greenwood scramble
The bramble, the bramble, the bonny forest bramble."

"Plague on your lungs, son Michael," said the abbot, "this is your old coil: always roaring in your cups."

"I know what I say," said brother Michael, "there is often more sense in an old song than in a new homily."

The courtly pad doth amble,
When his gay lord would ramble
But both may catch
An awkward scratch,
If they ride among the bramble
The bramble, the biamble, the bonny forest bramble "

"Tall friar," said Sir Ralph, "either you shoot the shafts of your merriment at random, or you know more of the earl's designs than beseems your frock."

"Let my frock," said brother Michael, "answer for its own sins. It is worn past covering mine. It is too weak for a shield, too transparent for a screen, too thin for a shelter, too light for gravity, and too threadbare for a jest. The wearer would be naught indeed who should misbeseem such a wedding garment."

But wherefore does the sheep wear wool?
That he in season sheared may be,
And the shepherd be warm though his flock be cool
So I'll have a new cloak about me "

The Earl of Huntingdon, living in the vicinity of a royal forest, and passionately attached to the chase from his infancy, had long made as free with the king's deer as Lord Percy proposed to do with those of Lord Douglas in the memorable hunting of Cheviot. It is sufficiently well known how severe were the forest-laws in those days, and with what jealousy the kings of England maintained this branch of their prerogative, but menaces and remonstrances were thrown away on the earl, who declared that he

would not thank Saint Peter for admission into Paradise, if he were obliged to leave his bow and hounds at the gate. King Henry (the Second) swore by Saint Botolph to make him rue his sport, and, having caused him to be duly and formally accused, summoned him to London to answer the charge. The earl, deeming himself safer among his own vassals than among king Henry's courtiers, took no notice of the mandate. King Henry sent a force to bring him, *vi et armis*, to court. The earl made a resolute resistance, and put the king's force to flight under a shower of arrows—an act which the courtiers declared to be treason. At the same time, the abbot of Doncaster sued up the payment of certain moneys, which the earl, whose revenue ran a losing race with his hospitality, had borrowed at sundry times of the said abbot: for the abbots and the bishops were the chief usurers of those days, and, as the end sanctifies the means, were not in the least scrupulous of employing what would have been extortion in the profane, to accomplish the pious purpose of bringing a blessing on the land by rescuing it from the frail hold of carnal and temporal into the firmer grasp of ghostly and spiritual possessors. But the earl, confident in the number and attachment of his retainers, stoutly refused either to repay the money, which he could not, or to yield the forfeiture, which he would not. a refusal which in those days was an act of outlawry in a gentleman, as it is now of bankruptcy in a base mechanic, the gentleman having in our wiser times a more liberal privilege of gentility, which enables him to keep his land and laugh at his creditor. Thus the mutual resentments and interests of the king and the abbot concurred to subject the earl to the penalties of outlawry, by which the abbot would gain his due upon the lands of Locksley, and the rest would be confiscated to the king. Still the king did not think it advisable

to assail the earl in his own strong-hold, but caused a diligent watch to be kept over his motions, till at length his rumoured marriage with the heiress of Arlingford seemed to point out an easy method of laying violent hands on the offender. Sir Ralph Montfaucon, a young man of good lineage and of an aspiring temper, who readily seized the first opportunity that offered of recommending himself to King Henry's favour by manifesting his zeal in his service, undertook the charge and how he succeeded we have seen

Sir Ralph's curiosity was strongly excited by the friar's description of the young lady of Arlingford, and he prepared in the morning to visit the castle, under the very plausible pretext of giving the baron an explanation of his intervention at the nuptials. Brother Michael and the little fat friar proposed to be his guides. The proposal was courteously accepted, and they set out together, leaving Sir Ralph's followers at the abbey. The knight was mounted on a spirited charger, brother Michael on a large heavy-trotting horse, and the little fat friar on a plump soft-paced galloway, so correspondent with himself in size, rotundity, and sleekness, that if they had been amalgamated into a centaur there would have been nothing to alter in their proportions

.

The knight and the friar arriving at Arlingford Castle, and leaving their horses in the care of lady Matilda's groom, with whom the friar was in great favour, were ushered into a stately apartment, where they found the baron alone, flourishing an enormous carving-knife over a brother baron—of beef—with as much vehemence of action as if he were cutting down an enemy. The baron was a gentleman of a fierce and choleric temperament: he was lineally

descended from the redoubtable Fierabras of Normandy, who came over to England with the Conqueror, and who, in the battle of Hastings, killed with his own hand four-and-twenty Saxon cavaliers all on a row. The very excess of the baron's internal rage on the preceding day had smothered its external manifestation: he was so equally angry with both parties, that he knew not on which to vent his wrath. He was enraged with the earl for having brought himself into such a dilemma without his privity, and he was no less enraged with the king's men for their very unseasonable intrusion. He could willingly have fallen upon both parties, but he must necessarily have begun with one, and he felt that on whichever side he should strike the first blow, his retainers would immediately join battle. He had therefore contented himself with forcing away his daughter from the scene of action. In the course of the evening he had received intelligence that the earl's castle was in possession of a party of the king's men, who had been detached by Sir Ralph Montfaucon to seize on it during the earl's absence. The baron inferred from this that the earl's case was desperate, and those who have had the opportunity of seeing a rich friend fall suddenly into poverty, may easily judge by their own feelings how quickly and completely the whole moral being of the earl was changed in the baron's estimation. The baron immediately proceeded to require in his daughter's mind the same summary revolution that had taken place in his own, and considered himself exceedingly ill-used by her non-compliance. The lady had retired to her chamber, and the baron had passed a supperless and sleepless night, stalking about his apartments till an advanced hour of the morning, when hunger compelled him to summon into his presence the spoils of the buttery, which, being the intended array of an uneaten wedding feast, were more than usually abundant,

and on which, when the knight and the friar entered, he was falling with desperate valour. He looked up at them fiercely, with his mouth full of beef and his eyes full of flame, and rising, as ceremony required, made an awful bow to the knight, inclining himself forward over the table and presenting his carving-knife *en militaire*, in a manner that seemed to leave it doubtful whether he meant to show respect to his visitor, or to defend his provision but the doubt was soon cleared up by his politely motioning the knight to be seated, on which the friar advanced to the table, saying, "For what we are going to receive," and commenced operations without further prelude by filling and drinking a goblet of wine. The baron at the same time offered one to Sir Ralph, with the look of a man in whom habitual hospitality and courtesy were struggling with the ebullitions of natural anger. They pledged each other in silence, and the baron, having completed a copious draught, continued working his lips and his throat, as if trying to swallow his wrath as he had done his wine. Sir Ralph, not knowing well what to make of these ambiguous signs, looked for instructions to the friar, who by significant looks and gestures seemed to advise him to follow his example and partake of the good cheer before him, without speaking till the baron should be more intelligible in his demeanour. The knight and the friar, accordingly, proceeded to refect themselves after their ride; the baron looking first at the one and then at the other, scrutinising alternately the serious looks of the knight and the merry face of the friar, till at length, having calmed himself sufficiently to speak, he said, "Courteous knight and ghostly father, I presume you have some other business with me than to eat my beef and drink my canary, and if so, I patiently await your leisure to enter on the topic."

"Lord Fitzwater," said Sir Ralph, "in obedience

to my royal master, King Henry, I have been the unwilling instrument of frustrating the intended nuptials of your fair daughter, yet will you, I trust, owe me no displeasure for my agency herein, seeing that the noble maiden might otherwise by this time have been the bride of an outlaw "

"I am very much obliged to you, sir," said the baron, "very exceedingly obliged. Your solicitude for my daughter is truly paternal, and for a young man and a stranger very singular and exemplary. and it is very kind withal to come to the relief of my insufficiency and inexperience, and concern yourself so much in that which concerns you not."

"You misconceive the knight, noble baron," said the friar. "He urges not his reason in the shape of a preconceived intent, but in that of a subsequent extenuation. True, he has done the lady Matilda great wrong——"

"How, great wrong?" said the baron. "What do you mean by great wrong? Would you have had her married to a wild fly-by-night, that accident made an earl and nature a deer-stealer? that has not wit enough to eat venison without picking a quarrel with monarchy? that flings away his own lands into the clutches of rascally friars, for the sake of hunting in other men's grounds, and feasting vagabonds that wear Lincoln green, and would have flung away mine into the bargain if he had had my daughter? What do you mean by great wrong?"

"True," said the friar, "great right, I meant."

"Right!" exclaimed the baron. "what right has any man to do my daughter right but myself? What right has any man to drive my daughter's bridegroom out of the chapel in the middle of the marriage ceremony, and turn all our merry faces into green wounds and bloody coxcombs, and then come and tell me he has done us great right?"

"True," said the friar. "he has done neither right nor wrong"

"But he has," said the baron, "he has done both, and I will maintain it with my glove"

"It shall not need," said Sir Ralph; "I will concede any thing in honour"

"And I," said the baron, "will concede nothing in honour. I will concede nothing in honour to any man"

"Neither will I, Lord Fitzwater," said Sir Ralph, "in that sense but hear me. I was commissioned by the king to apprehend the Earl of Huntingdon. I brought with me a party of soldiers, picked and tried men, knowing that he would not lightly yield. I sent my lieutenant with a detachment to surprise the earl's castle in his absence, and laid my measures for intercepting him on the way to his intended nuptials, but he seems to have had intimation of this part of my plan, for he brought with him a large armed retinue, and took a circuitous route, which made him, I believe, somewhat later than his appointed hour. When the lapse of time showed me that he had taken another track, I pursued him to the chapel, and I would have awaited the close of the ceremony, if I had thought that either yourself or your daughter would have felt desirous that she should have been the bride of an outlaw"

"Who said, sir," cried the baron, "that we were desirous of any such thing? But truly, sir, if I had a mind to the devil for a son-in-law, I would fain see the man that should venture to interfere."

"That would I," said the friar, "for I have undertaken to make her renounce the devil."

"She shall not renounce the devil," said the baron, "unless I please. You are very ready with your undertakings. Will you undertake to make her renounce the earl, who, I believe, is the devil incarnate? Will you undertake that?"

"Will I undertake," said the friar, "to make Trent run westward, or to make flame burn downward, or to make a tree grow with its head in the earth and its root in the air?"

"So then," said the baron, "a girl's mind is as hard to change as nature and the elements, and it is easier to make her renounce the devil than a lover. Are you a match for the devil, and no match for a man?"

"My warfare," said the friar, "is not of this world. I am militant not against man, but the devil, who goes about seeking what he may devour."

"Oh! does he so?" said the baron: "then I take it that makes you look for him so often in my buttery. Will you cast out the devil whose name is Legion, when you cannot cast out the imp whose name is Love?"

"Marriages," said the friar, "are made in heaven. Love is God's work, and therewith I meddle not."

"God's work, indeed!" said the baron, "when the ceremony was cut short in the church. Could men have put them asunder, if God had joined them together? And the earl is now no earl, but plain Robert Fitz-Ooth: therefore, I'll none of him."

"He may atone," said the friar, "and the king may mollify. The earl is a worthy peer, and the king is a courteous king."

"He cannot atone," said Sir Ralph. "He has killed the king's men, and if the baron should aid and abet, he will lose his castle and land."

"Will I?" said the baron, "not while I have a drop of blood in my veins. He that comes to take them shall first serve me as the friar serves my flasks of canary: he shall drain me dry as hay. Am I not disparaged? Am I not outraged? Is not my daughter vilified, and made a mockery? A girl half-married? There was my butler brought home

with a broken head My butler, friar there is that may move your sympathy Friar, the earl-no-earl shall come no more to my daughter "

" Very good," said the friar

" It is not very good," said the baron, " for I cannot get her to say so "

" I fear," said Sir Ralph, " the young lady must be much distressed and discomposed "

" Not a whit, sir," said the baron " She is, as usual, in a most provoking imperturbability, and contradicts me so smilingly that it would enrage you to see her "

" I had hoped," said Sir Ralph, " that I might have seen her, to make my excuse in person for the hard necessity of my duty "

He had scarcely spoken, when the door opened, and the lady made her appearance.

Matilda, not dreaming of visitors, tripped into the apartment in a dress of forest green, with a small quiver by her side, and a bow and arrow in her hand Her hair, black and glossy as the raven's wing, curled like wandering clusters of dark ripe grapes under the edge of her round bonnet, and a plume of black feathers fell back negligently above it, with an almost horizontal inclination, that seemed the habitual effect of rapid motion against the wind. Her black eyes sparkled like sunbeams on a river. a clear, deep, liquid radiance, the reflection of ethereal fire,—tempered, not subdued, in the medium of its living and gentle mirror. Her lips were half opened to speak as she entered the apartment, and with a smile of recognition to the friar, and a courtesy to the stranger knight, she approached the baron and said, " You are late at your breakfast, father."

" I am not at breakfast," said the baron. " I have been at supper: my last night's supper, for I had none."

"I am sorry," said Matilda, "you should have gone to bed supperless."

"I did not go to bed supperless," said the baron. "I did not go to bed at all and what are you doing with that green dress and that bow and arrow?"

"I am going a-hunting," said Matilda.

"A-hunting!" said the baron. "What, I warrant you, to meet with the earl, and slip your neck into the same noose?"

"No," said Matilda. "I am not going out of our own woods to-day."

"How do I know that?" said the baron. "What surety have I of that?"

"Here is the friar," said Matilda. "He will be surety."

"Not he," said the baron. "he will undertake nothing but where the devil is a party concerned."

"Yes, I will," said the friar. "I will undertake any thing for the lady Matilda."

"No matter for that," said the baron. "she shall not go hunting to day."

"Why, father," said Matilda, "if you coop me up here in this odious castle, I shall pine and die like a lonely swan on a pool."

"No," said the baron, "the lonely swan does not die on the pool. If there be a river at hand, she flies to the river, and finds her a mate, and so shall not you."

"But," said Matilda, "you may send with me any, or as many, of your grooms as you will."

"My grooms," said the baron, "are all false knaves. There is not a rascal among them but loves you better than me. Villains that I feed and clothe."

"Surely," said Matilda, "it is not villany to love me if it be, I should be sorry my father were an honest man." The baron relaxed his muscles into a smile. "Or my lover either," added Matilda. The baron looked grim again.

"For your lover," said the baron, "you may give God thanks of him. He is as arrant a knave as ever poached."

"What, for hunting the king's deer?" said Matilda. "Have I not heard you rail at the forest laws by the hour?"

"Did you ever hear me," said the baron, "rail myself out of house and land? If I had done that, then were I a knave."

"My lover," said Matilda, "is a brave man, and a true man, and a generous man, and a young man, and a handsome man, aye, and an honest man too."

"How can he be an honest man," said the baron, "when he has neither house nor land, which are the better part of a man?"

"They are but the husk of a man," said Matilda, "the worthless coat of the chesnut: the man himself is the kernel."

"The man is the grape stone," said the baron, "and the pulp of the melon. The house and land are the true substantial fruit, and all that give him savour and value."

"He will never want house or land," said Matilda, "while the meeting boughs weave a green roof in the wood, and the free range of the hart marks out the bounds of the forest."

"Vert and venison! vert and venison!" exclaimed the baron. "Treason and flat rebellion. Confound your smiling face! what makes you look so good-humoured? What! you think I can't look at you, and be in a passion? You think so, do you? We shall see. Have you no fear in talking thus, when here is the king's liegeman come to take us all into custody, and confiscate our goods and chattels?"

"Nay, Lord Fitzwater," said Sir Ralph, "you wrong me in your report. My visit is one of courtesy and excuse, not of menace and authority."

"There it is," said the baron. "every one takes

a pleasure in contradicting me Here is this courteous knight, who has not opened his mouth three times since he has been in my house except to take in provision, cuts me short in my story with a flat denial "

" Oh ! I cry you mercy, sir knight," said Matilda ,
" I did not mark you before. I am your debtor for no slight favour, and so is my liege lord "

" Her liege lord ! " exclaimed the baron, taking large strides across the chamber.

" Pardon me, gentle lady," said Sir Ralph " Had I known you before yesterday, I would have cut off my right hand ere it should have been raised to do you displeasure."

" Oh sir," said Matilda, " a good man may be forced on an ill office but I can distinguish the man from his duty " She presented to him her hand, which he kissed respectfully, and simultaneously with the contact thirty-two invisible arrows plunged at once into his heart, one from every point of the compass of his pericardium

" Well, father," added Matilda, " I must go to the woods "

" Must you ? " said the baron , " I say you must not "

" But I am going," said Matilda.

" But I will have up the drawbridge," said the baron.

" But I will swim the moat," said Matilda.

" But I will secure the gates," said the baron.

" But I will leap from the battlement," said Matilda

" But I will lock you in an upper chamber," said the baron

" But I will shred the tapestry," said Matilda,
" and let myself down "

" But I will lock you in a turret," said the baron,
" where you shall only see light through a loophole."

"But through that loophole," said Matilda, "will I take my flight, like a young eagle from its aerie; and, father, while I go out freely, I will return willingly but if once I slip out through a loophole——" She paused a moment, and then added, singing,—

The love that follows fain
Will never its faith betray
But the faith that is held in a chain
Will never be found again,
If a single link give way

The melody acted irresistibly on the harmonious propensities of the friar, who accordingly sang in his turn,—

For hark ! hark ! hark !
The dog doth bark,
That watches the wild deer's lair
The hunter awakes at the peep of the dawn,
But the lair it is empty, the deer it is gone,
And the hunter knows not where

Matilda and the friar sang together,—

Then follow, oh follow ! the hounds do cry
The red sun flames in the eastern sky
The stag bounds over the hollow
He that lingers in spirit, or loiters in hall,
Shall see us no more till the evening fall,
And no voice but the echo shall answer his call :
Then follow, oh follow, follow
Follow, oh follow, follow !

During the process of this harmony, the baron's eyes wandered from his daughter to the friar, and from the friar to his daughter again, with an alternate expression of anger differently modified: when he looked on the friar, it was anger without qualification; when he looked on his daughter it was still anger, but tempered by an expression of involuntary

admiration and pleasure. These rapid fluctuations of the baron's physiognomy—the habitual, reckless, resolute merriment in the jovial face of the friar,—and the cheerful, elastic spirits that played on the lips and sparkled in the eyes of Matilda,—would have presented a very amusing combination to Sir Ralph, if one of the three images in the group had not absorbed his total attention with feelings of intense delight very nearly allied to pain. The baron's wrath was somewhat counteracted by the reflection that his daughters good spirits seemed to show that they would naturally rise triumphant over all disappointments, and he had had sufficient experience of her humour to know that she might sometimes be led, but never could be driven. Then, too, he was always delighted to hear her sing, though he was not at all pleased in this instance with the subject of her song. Still he would have endured the subject for the sake of the melody of the treble, but his mind was not sufficiently attuned to unison to relish the harmony of the bass. The friar's accompaniment put him out of all patience, and—"So," he exclaimed, "this is the way, you teach my daughter to renounce the devil, is it? A hunting friar, truly! Who ever heard before of a hunting friar? A profane, roaring, bawling, bumper-bibbing, neck-breaking, catch-singing friar?"

"Under favour, bold baron," said the friar, but the friar was warm with canary, and in his singing vein; and he could not go on in plain unmusical prose. He therefore sang in a new tune,—

Though I be now a grey, grey friar,
Yet I was once a hale young knight
The cry of my dogs was the only choir
In which my spirit did take delight
Little I recked of matin bell,
But drowned its toll with my clanging horn
And the only beads I loved to tell
Were the beads of dew on the spangled thorn

The baron was going to storm, but the friar paused,
and Matilda sang in repetition,—

Little I reckon of matin bell,
But drown its toll with my clanging horn .
And the only beads I love to tell
Are the beads of dew on the spangled thorn,

And then she and the friar sang the four lines
together, and rang the changes upon them alternately.

Little I reckon of matin bell,

sang the friar.

"A precious friar," said the baron.

But drown its toll with my clanging horn,

sang Matilda

"More shame for you," said the baron.

And the only beads I love to tell
Are the beads of dew on the spangled thorn,

sang Matilda and the friar together.

"Penitent and confessor," said the baron: "a
hopeful pair truly "

The friar went on,—

An archer keen I was withal,
As ever did lean on greenwood tree ,
And could make the fleetest roebuck fall,
A good three hundred yards from me
Though changeful time, with hand severe,
Has made me now these joys forego,
Yet my heart bounds whene'er I hear
Yoicks ! hark away ! and tally ho !

Matilda chimed in as before

"Are you mad ? " said the baron "Are you

insane ? Are you possessed ? What do you mean ?
What in the devil's name do you both mean ? ”

Yoicks ! hark away ! and tally ho !

roared the friar.

The baron's pent-up wrath had accumulated like the waters above the dam of an overshot mill. The pond-head of his passion being now filled to the utmost limit of its capacity, and beginning to overflow in the quivering of his lips and the flashing of his eyes, he pulled up all the flash-boards at once, and gave loose to the full torrent of his indignation, by seizing, like furious Ajax, not a massy stone more than two modern men could raise, but a vast dish of beef more than fifty ancient yeomen could eat, and whirled it like a cart, *in terrorem*, over the head of the friar, to the extremity of the apartment,

Where it on oaken floor did settle,
With mighty din of ponderous metal

“ Nay father,” said Matilda, taking the baron's hand, “ do not harm the friar he means not to offend you My gaiety never before displeased you Least of all should it do so now, when I have need of all my spirits to outweigh the severity of my fortune ”

As she spoke the last words, tears started into her eyes, which, as if ashamed of the involuntary betraying of her feelings, she turned away to conceal. The baron was subdued at once He kissed his daughter, held out his hand to the friar, and said, “ Sing on, in God's name, and crack away the flasks till your voice swims in canary ” Then turning to Sir Ralph, he said, “ You see how it is, sir knight Matilda is my daughter, but she has me in leading-strings, that is the truth of it.”

[The baron subsequently allows Matilda to range at liberty whithersoever she would, under her positive promise to return home ; but her adventures lead him to withdraw his permission]

" You know, father," said Matilda, " the condition of keeping me at home · I get out if I can, and not on parole."

" Ay ! ay ! " said the baron, " if you can ; very true · watch and ward, Mawd, watch and ward is my word · if you can, is yours The mark is set, and so start fair "

The baron would have gone on in this way for an hour ; but the friar made his appearance with a long oak staff in his hand, singing,—

Drink and sing, and eat and laugh,
And so go forth to battle
For the top of a skull and the end of a staff
Do make a ghostly rattle

" Ho ! ho ! friar ! " said the baron—" singing friar, laughing friar, roaring friar, fighting friar, hacking friar, thwacking friar , cracking, cracking, cracking friar ; joke-cracking, bottle-cracking, skull-cracking friar ! "

" And ho ! ho ! " said the friar,— " bold baron, old baron, sturdy baron, wordy baron, long baron, strong baron, mighty baron, flighty baron, mazed baron, crazed baron, hacked baron, thwacked baron ; cracked, cracked, cracked baron , bone-cracked, sponce-cracked, brain-cracked baron ! "

" What do you mean," said the baron, " bully friar, by calling me hacked and thwacked ? "

" Were you not in the wars ? " said the friar, " where he who escapes unhacked does more credit to his heels than his arms. I pay tribute to your valour in calling you hacked and thwacked "

" I never was thwacked in my life," said the

baron ; " I stood my ground manfully, and covered my body with my sword If I had had the luck to meet with a fighting friar indeed, I might have been thwacked, and soundly too ; but I hold myself a match for any two laymen , it takes nine fighting laymen to make a fighting friar '

" Whence come you now, holy father ? " asked Matilda

" From Rubygill Abbey," said the friar, " whither I never return '

For I must seek some hermit cell,
Where I alone my beads may tell,
And on the wight who that way fares
Levy a toll for my ghostly pray'rs,
Levy a toll, levy a toll,
Levy a toll for my ghostly pray'rs "

" What is the matter then, father ? " said Matilda.

" This is the matter," said the friar . " my holy brethren have held a chapter on me, and sentenced me to seven years' privation of wine I therefore deemed it fitting to take my departure, which they would fain have prohibited I was enforced to clear the way with my staff. I have grievously beaten my dearly beloved brethren I grieve thereat , but they enforced me thereto I have beaten them much , I mowed them down to the right and to the left, and left them like an ill-reaped field of wheat, ear and straw pointing all ways, scattered in singleness and jumbled in masses , and so bade them farewell, saying, Peace be with you But I must not tarry, lest danger be in my rear therefore, farewell, sweet Matilda , and farewell, noble baron , and farewell, sweet Matilda again, the alpha and omega of father Michael, the first and the last "

" Farewell, father," said the baron, a little softened ;
" and God send you be never assailed by more than fifty men at a time."

"Amen," said the friar, "to that good wish"

"And we shall meet again, father, I trust," said Matilda.

"When the storm is blown over," said the baron.

"Doubt it not," said the friar, "though flooded Trent were between us, and fifty devils guarded the bridge."

He kissed Matilda's forehead, and walked away without a song.

[The outlawed Robert, Earl of Huntingdon, has now become Robin Hood the forester He is holding a council in Sherwood, when the distant sound of horses' feet is heard]

"Go," said Robin to Little John, "and invite yonder horseman to dinner"

Little John bounded away, and soon came before a young man, who was riding in a melancholy manner, with the bridle hanging loose on the horse's neck, and his eyes drooping towards the ground.

"Whither go you?" said Little John

"Whithersoever my horse pleases," said the young man.

"And that shall be," said Little John, "whither I please to lead him I am commissioned to invite you to dine with my master"

"Who is your master?" said the young man.

"Robin Hood," said Little John

"The bold outlaw?" said the stranger "Neither he nor you should have made me turn an inch aside yesterday; but to-day I care not"

"Then it is better for you," said Little John, "that you came to-day than yesterday, if you love dining in a whole skin for my master is the pink of courtesy. but if his guests prove stubborn, he bastes them and his venison together, while the friar says mass before meat."

The young man made no answer, and scarcely seemed to hear what Little John was saying, who therefore took the horse's bridle and led him to where Robin and his foresters were setting forth their dinner. Robin seated the young man next to Marian. Recovering a little from his stupor, he looked with much amazement at her, and the baron, and Robin, and the friar, listened to their conversation, and seemed much astonished to find himself in such holy and courtly company. Robin helped him largely to numble-pie and cygnet and pheasant, and the other dainties of his table, and the friar pledged him in ale and wine, and exhorted him to make good cheer. But the young man drank little, ate less, spake nothing, and every now and then sighed heavily.

When the repast was ended, "Now," said Robin, "you are at liberty to pursue your journey: but first be pleased to pay for your dinner."

"That would I gladly do, Robin," said the young man, "but all I have about me are five shillings and a ring. To the five shillings you shall be welcome, but for the ring I will fight while there is a drop of blood in my veins."

"Gallantly spoken," said Robin Hood. "A love-token, without doubt, but you must submit to our forest laws. Little John must search, and if he find no more than you say, not a penny will I touch, but if you have spoken false, the whole is forfeit to our fraternity."

"And with reason," said the friar, "for thereby is the truth maintained. The abbot of Doubleflask swore there was no money in his valise, and Little John forthwith emptied it of four hundred pounds. Thus was the abbot's perjury but of one minute's duration, for though his speech was false in the utterance, yet was it no sooner uttered than it became true, and we should have been *participes criminis* to have suffered the holy abbot to depart in falsehood."

whereas he came to us a false priest, and we sent him away a true man. Marry, we turned his cloak to further account, and thereby hangs a tale that may be either said or sung, for in truth I am minstrel here as well as chaplain; I pray for good success to our just and necessary warfare, and sing thanksgiving odes when our foresters bring in booty:

Bold Robln has robed him in ghostly attire,
And forth he is gone like a holy friar,
Singing, hey down, ho down, down, derry down
And of two grey friars he soon was aware,
Regaling themselves with dainty fare,
All on the fallen leaves so brown

"Good morrow, good brothers," said bold Robin Hood,
"And what make you in the good greenwood,
Singing hey down, ho down, down, derry down!
Now give me, I pray you, wine and food,
For none can I find in the good greenwood,
All on the fallen leaves so brown"

"Good brother," they said, "we would give you full fain,
But we have no more than enough for twain,
Singing, hey down, ho down, down, derry down"
"Then give me some money," said bold Robin Hood,
"For none can I find in the good greenwood,
All on the fallen leaves so brown"

"No money have we, good brother," said they
"Then," said he, "we three for money will pray
Singing, hey down, ho down, down, derry down
And whatever shall come at the end of our prayer,
We three holy friars will piously share,
All on the fallen leaves so brown"

"We will not pray with thee, good brother, God wot:
For truly, good brother, thou pleasest us not,
Singing hey down, ho down, down, derry down"
Then up they both started from Robin to run,
But down on their knees Robin pulled them each one,
All on the fallen leaves so brown

The grey friars prayed with a doleful face,
But bold Robin prayed with a right merry grace,

Singing, hey down, ho down, down, derry down
And when they had prayed, their portmanteau he took,
And from it a hundred good angels he shook,
All on the fallen leaves so brown

"The saints," said bold Robin, "have hearkened our
prayer,
And here's a good angel apiece for your share
If more you would have, you must win ere you wear
Singing hey down, ho down, down, derry down "
Then he blew his good horn with a musical cheer,
And fifty green bowmen came trooping full near,
And away the grey friars they bounded like deer,
All on the fallen leaves so brown

"Here is but five shillings and a ring," said Little John, "and the young man has spoken true "

"Then," said Robin to the stranger, "if want of money be the cause of your melancholy, speak. Little John is my treasurer, and he shall disburse to you."

"It is, and it is not," said the stranger; "it is, because, had I not wanted money I had never lost my love, it is not, because, now that I have lost her, money would come too late to regain her."

"In what way have you lost her?" said Robin. "let us clearly know that she is past regaining, before we give up our wishes to restore her to you"

"She is to be married this day," said the stranger, "and perhaps is married by this, to a rich old knight, and yesterday I knew it not "

"What is your name?" said Robin.

"Allen," said the stranger

"And where is the marriage to take place, Allen?" said Robin.

"At Edwinstow church," said Allen, "by the bishop of Nottingham "

"I know that bishop," said Robin; "he dined with me a month since, and paid three hundred pounds for his dinner. He has a good ear and loves music. The friar sang to him to some tune. Give

me my harper's cloak, and I will play a part at this wedding "

" These are dangerous times, Robin," said Marian, " for playing pranks out of the forest "

" Fear not," said Robin , " Edwinstow lies not Nottingham-ward, and I will take my precautions."

Robin put on his harper's cloak, while Little John painted his eyebrows and cheeks, tipped his nose with red, and tied him on a comely beard Marian confessed, that had she not been present at the metamorphosis, she should not have known her own true Robin Robin took his harp and went to the wedding

Robin found the bishop and his train in the church porch, impatiently expecting the arrival of the bride and bridegroom The clerk was observing to the bishop that the knight was somewhat gouty, and that the necessity of walking the last quarter of a mile from the road to the churchyard probably detained the lively bridegroom rather longer than had been calculated upon

" Oh ! by my fay," said the music-loving bishop, " here comes a harper in the nick of time, and now I care not how long they tarry Ho ! honest friend, are you come to play at the wedding ? "

" I am come to play anywhere," answered Robin, " where I can get a cup of sack , for which I will sing the praise of the donor in lofty verse, and emblazon him with any virtue which he may wish to have the credit of possessing, without the trouble of practising."

" A most courtly harper," said the bishop , " I will fill thee with sack , I will make thee a walking butt of sack, if thou wilt delight my ears with thy melodies "

" That will I," said Robin , " in what branch of my art shall I exert my faculty ? I am passing well in all, from the anthem to the glee, and from the *dirge* to the coranto."

"It would be idle," said the bishop, "to give thee sack for playing me anthems, seeing that I myself do receive sack for hearing them sung. Therefore, as the occasion is festive, thou shalt play me a coranto."

Robin struck up and played away merrily, the bishop all the while in great delight, noddling his head, and beating time with his foot, till the bride and bridegroom appeared. The bridegroom was richly apparelled, and came slowly and painfully forward, hobbling and leering, and pursing up his mouth into a smile of resolute defiance to the gout, and of tender complacency towards his lady love, who, shining like gold at the old knight's expense, followed slowly between her father and mother, her cheeks pale, her head drooping, her steps faltering, and her eyes reddened with tears.

Robin stopped his minstrelsy, and said to the bishop, "This seems to me an unfit match."

"What do you say, rascal?" said the old knight, hobbling up to him.

"I say," said Robin, "this seems to me an unfit match. What, in the devil's name, can you want with a young wife, who have one foot in flannels and the other in the grave?"

"What is that to thee, surrah varlet?" said the old knight, "stand away from the porch, or I will fracture thy scone with my cane."

"I will not stand away from the porch," said Robin, "unless the bride bid me, and tell me that you are her own true love."

"Speak," said the bride's father, in a severe tone, and with a look of significant menace. The girl looked alternately at her father and Robin. She attempted to speak, but her voice failed in the effort, and she burst into tears.

"Here is lawful cause and just impediment," said Robin, "and I forbid the banns."

"Who are you, villain?" said the old knight, stamping his sound foot with rage,

"I am the Roman law," said Robin, "which says that there shall not be more than ten years between a man and his wife, and here are five times ten: and so says the law of nature"

"Honest harper," said the bishop, "you are somewhat over-officious here, and less courtly than I deemed you. If you love sack, forbear, for this course will never bring you a drop. As to your Roman law, and your law of nature, what right have they to say any thing which the law of Holy Writ says not?"

"The law of Holy Writ does say it," said Robin, "I expound it so to say, and I will produce sixty commentators to establish my exposition"

And so saying, he produced a horn from beneath his cloak, and blew three blasts, and threescore bowmen in green came leaping from the bushes and trees; and young Allen was the first among them to give Robin his sword, while Friar Tuck and Little John marched up to the altar. Robin stripped the bishop and clerk of their robes, and put them on the friar and Little John, and Allen advanced to take the hand of the bride. Her cheeks grew red and her eyes grew bright, as she locked her hand in her lover's and tripped lightly with him into the church.

"This marriage will not stand," said the bishop, "for they have not been thrice asked in church"

"We will ask them seven times," said Little John, "lest three should not suffice."

"And in the meantime," said Robin, "the knight and the bishop shall dance to my harping"

So Robin sat in the church porch and played away merrily, while his foresters formed a ring, in the centre of which the knight and bishop danced with exemplary alacrity, and if they relaxed their

exertions, Scarlet gently touched them up with the point of an arrow.

The knight grimaced ruefully, and begged Robin to think of his gout

"So I do," said Robin, "this is the true antipodagron you shall dance the gout away, and be thankful to me while you live I told you," he added to the bishop, "I would play at this wedding, but you did not tell me that you would dance at it The next couple you marry, think of the Roman law"

The bishop was too much out of breath to reply, and now the young couple issued from church, and the bride having made a farewell obeisance to her parents, they departed together with the foresters, the parents storming, the attendants laughing, the bishop puffing and blowing, and the knight rubbing his gouty foot, and uttering doleful lamentations for the gold and jewels with which he had so unwittingly adorned and dowered the bride

[The baron, Robin and Marian journey towards Northumberland, disguised as pilgrims returned from Palestine, but are met and observed by Sir Ralph Montfaucon He suspects them, but is attended only by his squire, and allows them to pass]

Meanwhile our three pilgrims proceeded on their way. The evening set in black and lowering, when Robin turned aside from the main track, to seek an asylum for the night, along a narrow way that led between rocky and woody hills A peasant observed the pilgrims as they entered that narrow pass, and called after them. "Whither go you, my masters? there are rogues in that direction"

"Can you show us a direction," said Robin, "in which there are none? If so, we will take it in preference" The peasant grinned, and walked away whistling.

The pass widened as they advanced, and the woods grew thicker and darker around them. Their path wound along the slope of a woody declivity, which rose high above them in a thick rampart of foliage, and descended almost precipitously to the bed of a small river, which they heard dashing in its rocky channel, and saw its white foam gleaming at intervals in the last faint glimmerings of twilight. In a short time all was dark, and the rising voice of the wind foretold a coming storm. They turned a point of the valley, and saw a light below them in the depth of the hollow, shining through a cottage-casement and dancing in its reflection on the restless stream. Robin blew his horn, which was answered from below. The cottage door opened, a boy came forth with a torch, ascended the steep, showed tokens of great delight at meeting with Robin, and lighted them down a flight of steps rudely cut in the rock, and over a series of rugged stepping-stones, that crossed the channel of the river. They entered the cottage, which exhibited neatness, comfort, and plenty, being amply enriched with pots, pans, and pipkins, and adorned with flitches of bacon and sundry similar ornaments, that gave goodly promise in the firelight that gleamed upon the rafters. A woman, who seemed just old enough to be the boy's mother, had thrown down her spinning-wheel in her joy at the sound of Robin's horn, and was bustling with singular alacrity to set forth her festal ware and prepare an abundant supper. Her features, though not beautiful, were agreeable and expressive, and were now lighted up with such manifest joy at the sight of Robin, that Marian could not help feeling a momentary touch of jealousy, and a half-formed suspicion that Robin had broken his forest law, and had occasionally gone out of bounds, as other great men have done upon occasion, in order to reconcile the breach of the spirit, with the preservation of the

letter, of their own legislation. However, this suspicion, if it could be said to exist in a mind so generous as Marian's, was very soon dissipated by the entrance of the woman's husband, who testified as much joy as his wife had done at the sight of Robin, and in a short time the whole of the party were amicably seated round a smoking supper of river-fish and wild wood fowl, on which the baron fell with as much alacrity as if he had been a true pilgrim from Palestine.

The husband produced some recondite flasks of wine, which were laid by in a binn consecrated to Robin, whose occasional visits to them in his wanderings were the festal days of these warm-hearted cottagers, whose manners showed that they had not been born to this low estate. Their story had no mystery, and Marian easily collected it from the tenour of their conversation. The young man had been, like Robin, the victim of an usurious abbot, and had been outlawed for debt, and his nut-brown maid had accompanied him to the depths of Sherwood, where they lived an unholy and illegitimate life, killing the king's deer and never hearing mass. In this state, Robin, then earl of Huntingdon, discovered them in one of his huntings, and gave them aid and protection. When Robin himself became an outlaw, the necessary qualification or gift of continency was too hard a law for our lovers to subscribe to, and as they were thus disqualified for foresters, Robin had found them a retreat in this romantic and secluded spot. He had done similar service to other lovers similarly circumstanced, and had disposed them in various wild scenes which he and his men had discovered in their flittings from place to place, supplying them with all necessaries and comforts from the reluctant disgorgings of fat abbots and usurers. The benefit was in some measure mutual, for these cottages served him as resting-places in his removals, and enabled him to travel untraced and unmolested,

and in the delight with which he was always received he found himself even more welcome than he would have been at an inn and this is saying very much for gratitude and affection together. The smiles which surrounded him were of his own creation, and he participated in the happiness he had bestowed.

The casements began to rattle in the wind and the rain to beat upon the windows. The wind swelled to a hurricane, and the rain dashed like a flood against the glass. The baron retired to his little bed, the wife tumbled the lamp, the husband heaped logs upon the fire. Robin brought another flask, and Marian filled the baron's cup, and sweetened Robin's by touching its edge with her lips.

"Well," said the baron, "give me a roof over my head, be it never so humble. Your greenwood canopy is pretty and pleasant in sunshine but if I were doomed to live under it, I should wish it were water-tight."

"But," said Robin, "we have tents and caves for foul weather, good store of wine and venison and fuel in abundance."

"Ay, but," said the baron, "I like to pull off my boots of a night, which you foresters seldom do and to ensconce myself thereafter in a comfortable bed. Your beech-root is over hard for a couch, and your mossy stump is somewhat rough for a bolster."

"Had you not dry leaves," said Robin, "with a bishop's surplice over them? What would you have softer? And had you not an abbot's travelling cloak for a coverlet? What would you have warmer?"

"Very true," said the baron, "but that was an indulgence to a guest, and I dreamed all night of the sheriff of Nottingham. I like to feel myself safe," he added, stretching out his legs to the fire, and throwing himself back in his chair with the air of a man determined to be comfortable. "I like to feel myself safe," said the baron.

At that moment the woman caught her husband's arm, and all the party following direction of her eyes, looked simultaneously to the window, where they had just time to catch a glimpse of an apparition of an armed head, with its plumage tossing in the storm, on which the light shone from within, and which disappeared immediately.

Several knocks, as from the knuckles of an iron glove, were given to the door of the cottage, and a voice was heard entreating shelter from the storm for a traveller who had lost his way. Robin arose and went to the door.

"What are you?" said Robin.

"A soldier," replied the voice. "an unfortunate adherent of Longchamp, flying the vengeance of Prince John."

"Are you alone?" said Robin.

"Yes," said the voice. "it is a dreadful night. Hospitable cottagers, pray give me admittance. I would not have asked it but for the storm. I would have kept my watch in the woods."

"That I believe," said Robin. "You did not reckon on the storm when you turned into this pass. Do you know there are rogues this way?"

"I do," said the voice.

"So do I," said Robin.

A pause ensued, during which Robin listening attentively caught a faint sound of whispering.

"You are not alone," said Robin. "Who are your companions?"

"None but the wind and the water," said the voice, "and I would I had them not."

"The wind and the water have many voices," said Robin, "but I never before heard them say, What shall we do?"

Another pause ensued: after which,

"Look ye, master cottager," said the voice, in an

altered tone, "if you do not let us in willingly, we will break down the door"

"Ho! ho!" roared the baron, "you are become plural are you, rascals? How many are there of you, thieves? What, I warrant, you thought to rob and murder a poor harmless cottager and his wife, and did not dream of a garrison? You looked for no weapon of opposition but spit, poker, and basting ladle, wielded by unskilful hands but, rascals, here is short sword and long cudgel in hands well tried in war, wherewith you shall be drilled into cullenders and beaten into mummy"

No reply was made, but furious strokes from without resounded upon the door. Robin, Marian, and the baron threw by their pilgrim's attire, and stood in arms on the defensive. They were provided with swords, and the cottager gave them bucklers and helmets, for all Robin's haunts were furnished with secret armouries. But they kept their swords sheathed, and the baron wielded a ponderous spear, which he pointed towards the door ready to run through the first that should enter, and Robin and Marian each held a bow with the arrow drawn to its head and pointed in the same direction. The cottager flourished a strong cudgel (a weapon in the use of which he prided himself on being particularly expert), and the wife seized the spit from the fireplace, and held it as she saw the baron hold his spear. The storm of wind and rain continued to beat on the roof and the casement, and the storm of blows to resound upon the door, which at length gave way with a violent crash, and a cluster of armed men appeared without, seemingly not less than twelve. Behind them rolled the stream now changed from a gentle and shallow river to a mighty and impetuous torrent, roaring in waves of yellow foam, partially reddened by the light that streamed through the open door, and turning up its convulsed surface in

flashes of shifting radiance from restless masses of half-visible shadow. The stepping-stones, by which the intruders must have crossed, were buried under the waters. On the opposite bank the light fell on the stems and boughs of the rock-rooted oak and ash tossing and swaying in the blast, and sweeping the flashing spray with their leaves.

The instant the door broke, Robin and Marian loosed their arrows. Robin's arrow struck one of the assailants in the juncture of the shoulder, and disabled his right arm. Marian's struck a second in the juncture of the knee, and rendered him unserviceable for the night. The baron's long spear struck on the mailed breastplate of a third, and being stretched to its full extent by the long-armed hero, drove him to the edge of the torrent, and plunged him into its eddies, along which he was whirled down the darkness of the descending stream, calling vainly on his comrades for aid, till his voice was lost in the mingled roar of the waters and the wind. A fourth springing through the door was laid prostrate by the cottager's cudgel. but the wife being less dexterous than her company, though an Amazon in strength, missed her pass at a fifth, and drove the point of the spit several inches into the right hand door-post as she stood close to the left, and thus made a new barrier which the invaders could not pass without dipping under it and submitting their necks to the sword: but one of the assailants seizing it with gigantic rage, shook it at once from the grasp of its holder and from its lodgment in the post, and at the same time made good the irruption of the rest of his party into the cottage.

Now raged an unequal combat, for the assailants fell two to one on Robin, Marian, the baron, and the cottager, while the wife, being deprived of her spit, converted every thing that was at hand to a missile, and rained pots, pans, and pipkins on the armed

heads of the enemy. The baron raged like a tiger, and the cottager laid about him like a threshers. One of the soldiers struck Robin's sword from his hand and brought him on his knee, when the boy, who had been roused by the tumult and had been peeping through the inner door, leaped forward in his shirt, picked up the sword and replaced it in Robin's hand, who instantly springing up, disarmed and wounded one of his antagonists, while the other was laid prostrate under the dint of a brass caldron launched by the Amazonian dame. Robin now turned to the aid of Marian, who was parrying most dexterously the cuts and slashes of her two assailants, of whom Robin delivered her from one, while a well-applied blow of her sword struck off the helmet of the other, who fell on his knees to beg a boon, and she recognised Sir Ralph Montfaucon. The men who were engaged with the baron and the peasant, seeing their leader subdued, immediately laid down their arms and cried for quarter. The wife brought some strong rope, and the baron tied their arms behind them.

"Now, Sir Ralph," said Marian, "once more you are at my mercy."

"That I always am, cruel beauty," said the discomfited lover.

"Odso! courteous knight," said the baron, "is this the return you make for my beef and canary, when you kissed my daughter's hand in token of contrition for your intermeddling at her wedding? Heart, I am glad to see she has given you a bloody coxcomb. Slice him down, Mawd! slice him down, and fling him into the river."

"Confess," said Marian, "what brought you here, and how did you trace our steps?"

"I will confess nothing," said the knight.

"Then confess you, rascal," said the baron, holding his sword to the throat of the captive squire.

"Take away the sword," said the squire, "it is

too near my mouth, and my voice will not come out for fear. take away the sword, and I will confess all." The baron dropped his sword, and the squire proceeded, "Sir Ralph met you, as you quitted Lady Falkland's castle, and by representing to her who you were, borrowed from her such a number of her retainers as he deemed must ensure your capture, seeing that your familiar the friar was not at your elbow. We set forth without delay, and traced you first by means of a peasant who saw you turn into this valley, and afterwards by the light from the casement of this solitary dwelling. Our design was to have laid an ambush for you in the morning, but the storm and your observation of my unlucky face through the casement made us change our purpose, and what followed you can tell better than I can, being indeed masters of the subject."

"You are a merry knave," said the baron, "and here is a cup of wine for you."

"Gramercy," said the squire, "and better late than never. but I lacked a cup of this before. Had I been pot-valiant, I had held you play."

"Sir knight," said Marian, "this is the third time you have sought the life of my lord and of me, for mine is interwoven with his. And do you think me so spiritless as to believe that I can be yours by compulsion? Tempt me not again, for the next time shall be the last, and the fish of the nearest river shall commute the flesh of a recreant knight into the fast-day dinner of an uncarnivorous friar. I spare you now, not in pity but in scorn. Yet shall you swear to a convention never more to pursue or molest my lord or me, and on this condition you shall live."

The knight had no alternative but to comply, and swore, on the honour of knighthood, to keep the convention inviolate. How well he kept his oath we shall have no opportunity of narrating: *Di lui la nostra istoria più non parla*

SONG ¹

It was a friar of orders free,
A friar of Rubygill
At the greenwood-tree a vow made he,
But he kept it very ill
A vow made he of chastity,
But he kept it very ill
He kept it, perchance, in the conscious shade
Of the bounds of the forest wherein it was made .
But he roamed where he listed, as free as the wind,
And he left his good vow in the forest behind
For its woods out of sight were his vow out of mind,
With the friar of Rubygill

In lonely hut himself he shut,
The friar of Rubygill ,
Where the ghostly elf absolved himself,
To follow his own good will
And he had no lack of canary sack,
To keep his conscience still
And a damsel well knew, when at lonely midnight
It gleamed on the waters, his signal-lamp-light
" Over ! over ! " she warbled with nightingale throat,
And the friar sprung forth at the magical note,
And she crossed the dark stream in his trim ferry-boat,
With the friar of Rubygill

[Sung by Maid Marian.]

SONG ¹

Ye woods, that oft at sultry noon
Have o'er me spread your massy shade
Ye gushing streams, whose murmured tune
Has in my ear sweet music made,
While, where the dancing pebbles show
Deep in the restless fountain-pool
The gelid water's upward flow,
My second flask was laid to cool.

Ye pleasant sights of leaf and flower :
Ye pleasant sounds of bird and bee
Ye sports of deer in sylvan bower
Ye feasts beneath the greenwood tree
Ye baskings in the vernal sun
Ye slumbers in the summer dell
Ye trophies that this arm has won :
And must ye hear your friar's farewell ?

¹ [*Friar Tuck's Farewell to the forest*]

THE MISFORTUNES OF ELPHIN

[Peacock's fifth novel opens with an account of the Prosperity of Gwaelod]

IN the beginning of the sixth century, when Uther Pendragon held the nominal sovereignty of Britain over a number of petty kings, Gwythno Garanhir was king of Caredigion. The most valuable portion of his dominions was the Great Plain of Gwaelod, an extensive tract of level land, stretching along that part of the sea-coast which now belongs to the counties of Merioneth and Cardigan. This district was populous and highly cultivated. It contained sixteen fortified towns, superior to all the towns and cities of the Cynry, excepting *Caer Lleon* upon *Usk*, and, like *Caer Lleon*, they bore in their architecture, their language, and their manners, vestiges of past intercourse with the Roman lords of the world. It contained also one of the three privileged ports of the isle of Britain, which was called the Port of Gwythno. This port, we may believe if we please, had not been unknown to the Phœnicians and Carthaginians, when they visited the island for metal, accommodating the inhabitants, in return, with luxuries which they would not otherwise have dreamed of, and which they could very well have done without, of course, in arranging the exchange of what they denominated equivalents, imposing on their simplicity, and taking advantage of their ignorance, according to the approved practice of civilized nations, which they called imparting the blessings of Phœnician and Carthaginian light.

An embankment of massy stone protected this lowland country from the sea, which was said, in

traditions older than the embankment, to have, in occasional spring-tides, paid short but unwelcome visits to the interior inhabitants, and to have, by slow aggressions, encroached considerably on the land. To prevent the repetition of the first of these inconveniences, and to check the progress of the second, the people of Gwaelod had built the stony rampart, which had withstood the shock of the waves for centuries, when Gwythno began his reign.

Gwythno, like other kings, found the business of governing too light a matter to fill up the vacancy of either his time or his head, and took to the more solid pursuits of harping and singing, not forgetting feasting, in which he was glorious, nor hunting, wherein he was mighty. His several pursuits composed a very harmonious triad. The chase conducted to the good cheer of the feast, and to the good appetite which consumed it; the feast inspired the song, and the song gladdened the feast, and celebrated the chase.

Gwythno and his subjects went on together very happily. They had little to do with him but to pay him revenue, and he had little to do with them but to receive it. Now and then they were called on to fight for the protection of his sacred person, and for the privilege of paying revenue to him rather than to any of the kings in his vicinity, a privilege of which they were particularly tenacious. His lands being far more fertile, and his people, consequently, far more numerous, than those of the rocky dwellers on his borders, he was always victorious in the defensive warfare to which he restricted his military achievements, and, after the invaders of his dominions had received two or three inflictions of signal chastisement, they limited their aggressions to coming quietly in the night, and vanishing, before morning, with cattle: an heroic operation, in which,

the preeminent glory of Scotland renders the similar exploits of other nations not worth recording.

Gwythno was not fond of the sea : a moonstruck bard had warned him to beware of the oppression of *Gwenhüdw*,¹ and he thought he could best do so by keeping as far as possible out of her way. He had a palace built of choice slate stone on the rocky banks of the *Mawddach*, just above the point where it quitted its native mountains, and entered the plain of *Gwaelod*. Here, among green woods and sparkling waters, he lived in festal munificence, and expended his revenue in encouraging agriculture, by consuming a large quantity of produce.

Watchtowers were erected along the embankment, and watchmen were appointed to guard against the first approaches of damage or decay. The whole of these towers, and their companies of guards, were subordinate to a central castle, which commanded the sea-port already mentioned, and wherein dwelt Prince *Seithenyn ap Seithyn Saidi*, who held the office of *Arglwyd Gorwarcheidwad yr Argae Breninawl*, which signifies, in English, Lord High Commissioner of Royal Embankment, and he executed it as a personage so denominated might be expected to do. he drank the profits, and left the embankment to his deputies, who left it to their assistants, who left it to itself

The condition of the head, in a composite as in a simple body, affects the entire organization to the extremity of the tail, excepting that, as the tail in the figurative body usually receives the largest share in the distribution of punishment, and the smallest in the distribution of reward, it has the stronger stimulus to ward off evil, and the smaller supply of means to indulge in diversion ; and it sometimes happen that one of the least regarded of the component parts

¹ *Gwen-hüdw*, 'the white alluring one' the name of a mermaid Used figuratively for the elemental power of the sea

of the said tail will, from a pure sense of duty, or an inveterate love of business, or an oppressive sense of ennui, or a development of the organ of order, or some other equally cogent reason, cheerfully undergo all the care and labour, of which the honour and profit will redound to higher quarters.

Such a component portion of the Gwaelod High Commission of Royal Embankment was Terthrin ap Tathral, who had the charge of a watchtower where the embankment terminated at the point of Mochres, in the high land of Ardudwy Terthrin kept his portion of the embankment in exemplary condition, and paced with daily care the limits of his charge, but one day, by some accident, he strayed beyond them, and observed symptoms of neglect that filled him with dismay This circumstance induced him to proceed till his wanderings brought him round to the embankment's southern termination in the high land of Caredigion He met with abundant hospitality at the towers of his colleagues, and at the castle of Serthenyn he was supposed to be walking for his amusement, he was asked no questions, and he carefully abstained from asking any. He examined and observed in silence, and, when he had completed his observations, he hastened to the palace of Gwythno

[Finding that the king is engaged in composing an ode, Terthrin tells his news to Gwythno's heir, Prince Elphun, and sets off with him along the embankment on a visit of remonstrance to the Lord High Commissioner]

The sun had sunk beneath the waves when they reached the castle of Serthenyn The sound of the harp and the song saluted them as they approached it. As they entered the great hall, which was already blazing with torchlight, they found his highness,

and his highness's household, convincing themselves and each other with wine and wassail, of the excellence of their system of virtual superintendence; and the following jovial chorus broke on the ears of the visitors:

THE CIRCLING OF THE MEAD HORNS

Fill the blue horn, the blue buffalo horn
Natural is mead in the buffalo horn
As the cuckoo in spring, as the lark in the morn,
So natural is mead in the buffalo horn

As the cup of the flower to the bee when he sips,
Is the full cup of mead to the true Briton's lips
From the flower-cups of summer, on field and on tree,
Our mead cups are filled by the vintager bee

Seitheny¹ ap Seithyn, the generous, the bold,
Drinks the wine of the stranger from vessels of gold,²
But ye from the horn, the blue silver-rimmed horn,
Drink the ale and the mead in our fields that were born

The ale-froth is white, and the mead sparkles bright,
They both smile apart, and with smiles they unite³
The mead from the flower, and the ale from the corn,
Smile, sparkle, and sing in the buffalo horn

The horn, the blue horn, cannot stand on its tip,
Its path is right on from the hand to the lip
Though the bowl and the wine-cup our tables adorn,
More natural the draught from the buffalo horn

But Seitheny¹ ap Seithyn, the generous, the bold,
Drinks the bright-flowing wine from the far-gleaming gold.
The wine, in the bowl by his lip that is worn,
Shall be glorious as mead in the buffalo horn

The horns circle fast, but their fountains will last,
As the stream passes ever, and never is past.
Exhausted so quickly, replenished so soon,
They wax and they wane like the horns of the moon

¹ The accent is on the second syllable Seithényn.

² Gwin o eur ANEURIN

³ The mixture of ale and mead made *bradawd*, a favourite drink of the Ancient Britons

Fill high the blue horn, the blue buffalo horn ,
Fill high the long silver-rimmed buffalo horn
While the roof of the hall by our chorus is torn,
Fill, fill to the brim, the deep silver-rimmed horn

Elphin and Teithrin stood some time on the floor of the hall before they attracted the attention of Seithenyn, who, during the chorus, was tossing and flourishing his golden goblet. The chorus had scarcely ended when he noticed them, and immediately roared aloud, " You are welcome all four "

Elphin answered, " We thank you : we are but two."

" Two or four," said Seithenyn, " all is one. You are welcome all. When a stranger enters, the custom in other places is to begin by washing his feet. My custom is, to begin by washing his throat. Seithenyn ap Seithyn Saidi bids you welcome "

Elphin, taking the wine-cup, answered, " Elphin ap Gwythno Garanhir thanks you "

Seithenyn started up. He endeavoured to straighten himself into perpendicularity, and to stand steadily on his legs. He accomplished half his object by stiffening all his joints but those of his ancles, and from these the rest of his body vibrated upwards with the inflexibility of a bar. After thus oscillating for a time, like an inverted pendulum, finding that the attention requisite to preserve his rigidity absorbed all he could collect of his dissipated energies, and that he required a portion of them for the management of his voice, which he felt a dizzy desire to wield with peculiar steadiness in the presence of the son of the king, he suddenly relaxed the muscles that perform the operation of sitting, and dropped into his chair like a plummet. He then, with a gracious gesticulation, invited Prince Elphin to take his seat on his right hand, and proceeded to compose himself into a dignified attitude, throwing his body back into the left corner of his chair, resting

his left elbow on its arm and his left cheekbone on the middle of the back of his left hand, placing his left foot on a footstool, and stretching out his right leg as straight and as far as his position allowed. He had thus his right hand at liberty, for the ornament of his eloquence and the conduct of his liquor.

Elphin seated himself at the right hand of Seithenyn. Teithrin remained at the end of the hall. on which Seithenyn exclaimed, "Come on, man, come on. What, if you be not the son of a king, you are the guest of Seithenyn ap Seithyn Saidi. The most honourable place to the most honourable guest, and the next most honourable place to the next most honourable guest, the least honourable guest above the most honourable inmate, and, where there are but two guests, be the most honourable who he may, the least honourable of the two is next in honour to the most honourable of the two, because they are no more but two, and, where there are only two, there can be nothing between. Therefore sit, and drink GWIN O EUR wine from gold."

Elphin motioned Teithrin to approach, and sit next to him.

Prince Seithenyn, whose liquor was "his eating and his drinking solely," seemed to measure the gastronomy of his guests by his own, but his groom of the pantry thought the strangers might be disposed to eat, and placed before them a choice of provision, on which Teithrin ap Tathral did vigorous execution.

"I pray your excuses," said Seithenyn, "my stomach is weak, and I am subject to dizziness in the head, and my memory is not so good as it was, and my faculties of attention are somewhat impaired, and I would dilate more upon the topic, whereby you should hold me excused, but I am troubled with a feverishness and parching of the mouth, that very much injures my speech, and impedes my saying all I would say, and will say before I have done, in

token of my loyalty and fealty to your highness and your highness's house I must just moisten my lips, and I will then proceed with my observations. Cupbearer, fill "

" Prince Seithenyn," said Elphin, " I have visited you on a subject of deep moment Reports have been brought to me, that the embankment, which has been so long intrusted to your care, is in a state of dangerous decay "

" Decay," said Seithenyn, " is one thing, and danger is another Every thing that is old must decay. That the embankment is old, I am free to confess , that it is somewhat rotten in parts, I will not altogether deny , that it is any the worse for that, I do most sturdily gainsay. It does its business well it works well it keeps out the water from the land, and it lets in the wine upon the High Commission of Embankment Cupbearer, fill Our ancestors were wiser than we they built it in their wisdom , and, if we should be so rash as to try to mend it, we should only mar it "

" The stonework," said Teithrin, " is sapped and mined the piles are rotten, broken, and dislocated the floodgates and sluices are leaky and creaky."

" That is the beauty of it," said Seithenyn " Some parts of it are rotten, and some parts of it are sound."

" It is well," said Elphin, " that some parts are sound it were better that all were so "

" So I have heard some people say before," said Seithenyn , " perverse people, blind to venerable antiquity that very unamiable sort of people, who are in the habit of indulging their reason. But I say, the parts that are rotten give elasticity to those that are sound they give them elasticity, elasticity, elasticity If it were all sound, it would break by its own obstinate stiffness. the soundness is checked by the rottenness, and the stiffness is balanced by the elasticity. There is nothing so

dangerous as innovation. See the waves in the equinoctial storms, dashing and clashing, roaring and pouring, spattering and battering, rattling and battling against it I would not be so presumptuous as to say, I could build any thing that would stand against them half an hour, and here this immortal old work, which God forbid the finger of modern mason should bring into jeopardy, this immortal work has stood for centuries, and will stand for centuries more, if we let it alone It is well it works well let well alone Cupbearer, fill It was half rotten when I was born, and that is a conclusive reason why it should be three parts rotten when I die "

The whole body of the High Commission roared approbation

"And after all," said Seithenyn, "the worst that could happen would be the overflow of a springtide, for that was the worst that happened before the embankment was thought of, and, if the high water should come in, as it did before, the low water would go out again, as it did before We should be no deeper in it than our ancestors were, and we could mend as easily as they could make "

"The level of the sea," said Teithrin, "is materially altered "

"The level of the sea!" exclaimed Seithenyn. "Who ever heard of such a thing as altering the level of the sea? Alter the level of that bowl of wine before you, in which, as I sit here, I see a very ugly reflection of your very goodlooking face. Alter the level of that: drink up the reflection let me see the face without the reflection, and leave the sea to level itself "

"Not to level the embankment," said Teithrin.

"Good, very good," said Seithenyn. "I love a smart saying, though it hits at me. But, whether yours is a smart saying or no, I do not very clearly

see , and, whether it hits at me or no, I do not very sensibly feel But all is one. Cupbearer, fill "

" I think," pursued Seithenyn, looking as intently as he could at Teithrin ap Tathral, " I have seen something very like you before. There was a fellow here the other day very like you he stayed here some time he would not talk he did nothing but drink he used to drink till he could not stand, and then he went walking about the embankment I suppose he thought it wanted mending , but he did not say any thing. If he had, I should have told him to embank his own throat, to keep the liquor out of that. That would have posed him he could not have answered that he would not have had a word to say for himself after that."

" He must have been a miraculous person," said Teithrin, " to walk when he could not stand."

" All is one for that," said Seithenyn. " Cupbearer, fill "

" Prince Seithenyn," said Elphin, " if I were not aware that wine speaks in the silence of reason, I should be astonished at your strange vindication of your neglect of duty, which I take shame to myself for not having sooner known and remedied The wise bard has well observed, ' Nothing is done without the eye of the king ' "

" I am very sorry," said Seithenyn, " that you see things in a wrong light : but we will not quarrel for three reasons first, because you are the son of the king, and may do and say what you please, without any one having a right to be displeased . second, because I never quarrel with a guest, even if he grows riotous in his cups : third, because there is nothing to quarrel about , and perhaps that is the best reason of the three ; or rather the first is the best, because you are the son of the king , and the third is the second, that is, the second best, because there is nothing to quarrel about ; and the second is nothing

to the purpose, because, though guests will grow riotous in their cups, in spite of my good orderly example, God forbid I should say, that is the case with you And I completely agree in the truth of your remark, that reason speaks in the silence of wine."

Seithenyn accompanied his speech with a vehement swinging of his right hand in so doing, at this point, he dropped his cup a sudden impulse of rash volition, to pick it dexterously up before he resumed his discourse, ruined all his devices for maintaining dignity, in stooping forward from his chair, he lost his balance, and fell prostrate on the floor

The whole body of the High Commission arose in simultaneous confusion, each zealous to be the foremost in uplifting his fallen chief In the vehemence of their uprising, they hurled the benches backward and the tables forward, the crash of cups and bowls accompanied their overthrow and rivulets of liquor ran gurgling through the hall The household wished to redeem the credit of their leader in the eyes of the Prince, but the only service they could render him was to participate his discomfiture, for Seithenyn, as he was first in dignity, was also, as was fitting, hardest in skull, and that which had impaired his equilibrium had utterly destroyed theirs Some fell, in the first impulse, with the tables and benches, others were tripped up by the rolling bowls, and the remainder fell at different points of progression, by jostling against each other, or stumbling over those who had fallen before them.

[A fierce storm arises from the west, and carries away one of the towers of Seithenyn's castle, which had long been sapped by the waves. The crash rouses the High Commissioner and his comrades from their drunken slumbers]

Seithenyn leaned against a pillar, and stared at the sea through the rifted wall, with wild and vacant surprise. He perceived that there was an innovation, and he felt that he was injured. how, or by whom, he did not quite so clearly discern. He looked at Elphin and Teithrin, at his daughter, and at the members of his household, with a long and dismal aspect of blank and mute interrogation, modified by the struggling consciousness of puzzled self-importance, which seemed to require from his chiefship some word of command in this incomprehensible emergency. But the longer he looked, the less clearly he saw, and the longer he pondered, the less he understood. He felt the rush of the wind, he saw the white foam of the sea, his ears were dizzy with their mingled roar. He remained at length motionless, leaning against the pillar, and gazing on the breakers with fixed and glaring vacancy.

"The sleepers of Gwaelod," said Elphin, "they who sleep in peace and security, trusting to the vigilance of Seithenyn, what will become of them?"

"Warn them with the beacon fire," said Teithrin, "if there be fuel on the summit of the landward tower."

"That of course has been neglected too," said Elphin.

"Not so," said Angharad, "that has been my charge."

Teithrin seized a torch, and ascended the eastern tower, and, in a few minutes, the party in the hall beheld the breakers reddening with the reflected fire, and deeper and yet deeper crimson tinging the whirling foam, and sheeting the massy darkness of the bursting waves.

Seithenyn turned his eyes on Elphin. His recollection of him was extremely faint, and the longer he looked on him he remembered him the less. He was conscious of the presence of strangers, and of the

occurrence of some signal mischief, and associated the two circumstances in his dizzy perceptions with a confused but close connexion. He said at length, looking sternly at Elphin, "I do not know what right the wind has to blow upon me here, nor what business the sea has to show itself here, nor what business you have here but one thing is very evident, that either my castle or the sea is on fire, and I shall be glad to know who has done it, for terrible shall be the vengeance of Seithenyn ap Seithyn. Show me the enemy," he pursued, drawing his sword furiously, and flourishing it over his head, "Show me the enemy, show me the enemy."

An unusual tumult mingled with the roar of the waves, a sound, the same in kind, but greater in degree, with that produced by the loose stones of the beach, which are rolled to and fro by the surf.

Teithrin rushed into the hall, exclaiming, "All is over! the mound is broken, and the springtide is rolling through the breach."

Another portion of the castle wall fell into the mining waves, and, by the dim and thickly-clouded moonlight, and the red blaze of the beacon fire, they beheld a torrent pouring in from the sea upon the plain, and rushing immediately beneath the castle walls, which, as well as the points of the embankment that formed the sides of the breach, continued to crumble away into the waters.

"Who has done this?" vociferated Seithenyn. "Show me the enemy."

"There is no enemy but the sea," said Elphin, "to which you, in your drunken madness, have abandoned the land. Think, if you can think, of what is passing in the plain. The storm drowns the cries of your victims; but the curses of the perishing are upon you."

"Show me the enemy," vociferated Seithenyn, flourishing his sword more furiously.

Angharad looked deprecatingly at Elphin, who abstained from further reply.

"There is no enemy but the sea," said Teithrin, "against which your sword avails not"

"Who dares to say so?" said Seithenyn. "Who dares to say that there is an enemy on earth against whom the sword of Seithenyn ap Seithyn is unavailing? Thus, thus I prove the falsehood"

And, springing suddenly forward, he leaped into the torrent, flourishing his sword as he descended.

"Oh, my unhappy father!" sobbed Angharad, veiling her face with her arm on the shoulder of one of her female attendants, whom Elphin dexterously put aside, and substituted himself as the supporter of the desolate beauty.

"We must quit the castle," said Teithrin, "or we shall be buried in its ruins. We have but one path of safety, along the summit of the embankment, if there be not another breach between us and the high land, and if we can keep our footing in this hurricane. But there is no alternative. The walls are melting away like snow"

. . .

Angharad, recovering from the first shock of Seithenyn's catastrophe, became awake to the imminent danger. The spirit of the Cymric female, vigilant and energetic in peril, disposed her and her attendant maidens to use their best exertions for their own preservation. Following the advice and example of Elphin and Teithrin, they armed themselves with spears, which they took down from the walls

Teithrin led the way, striking the point of his spear firmly into the earth, and leaning from it on the wind. Angharad followed in the same manner: Elphin followed Angharad, looking as earnestly to her safety as was compatible with moderate care of

his own : the attendant maidens followed Elphin , and the bard, whom the result of his first experiment had rendered unambitious of the van, followed the female train. Behind them went the cupbearers, whom the accident of sobriety had qualified to march : and behind them reeled and roared those of the bacchanal rout who were able and willing to move , those more especially who had wives or daughters to support their tottering steps. Some were incapable of locomotion, and others, in the heroic madness of liquor, sat down to await their destiny, as they finished the half-drained vessels.

The bard, who had somewhat of a picturesque eye, could not help sparing a little leisure from the care of his body, to observe the effects before him : the volumed blackness of the storm , the white bursting of the breakers in the faint and scarcely-perceptible moonlight ; the rushing and rising of the waters within the mound , the long floating hair and waving drapery of the young women , the red light of the beacon fire falling on them from behind , the surf rolling up the side of the embankment, and breaking almost at their feet ; the spray flying above their heads ; and the resolution with which they impinged the stony ground with their spears, and bore themselves up against the wind.

Thus they began their march. They had not proceeded far, when the tide began to recede, the wind to abate somewhat of its violence, and the moon to look on them at intervals through the rifted clouds, disclosing the desolation of the inundated plain, silvering the tumultuous surf, gleaming on the distant mountains, and revealing a lengthened prospect of their solitary path, that lay in its irregular line like a ribbon on the deep.

[The greater part of the kingdom was now swallowed up by the sea, but Gwythno kept possession of his

palace, and "Elphin married Angharad, and built a salmon-weir on the *Mawddach*, the produce of which, with that of a series of beehives, of which his princess and her maidens made mead, constituted for some time the principal wealth and subsistence of the royal family of *Caredigion*" Elphin, one July night, found in his weir a coracle containing a sleeping child, *Tahesin*, whom *Gwythno* educated as a bard. *Tahesin* fell in love with the princess *Melanghel*, daughter of *Elphin* and *Angharad*. After *Gwythno*'s death, *Elphin* succeeded him as king of *Caredigion*, but was taken prisoner by *Maelgon Gwynelli*, who ruled the neighbouring kingdom. In order to win *Melanghel*'s hand, *Tahesin* sought *Elphin*'s release from *Maelgon*, who refused it. *Tahesin* then set out to complain of *Maelgon*'s injustice at the court of *Arthur*, who "reigned in *Caer Leon* as king of the kings of Britain"]

On his way to *Caer Leon*, he was received with all hospitality, entertained with all admiration, and dismissed with all honour, at the castles of several petty kings, and, amongst the rest, at the castle of *Dinas Vawr*, on the *Towy*, which was then garrisoned by King *Melvas*, who had marched with a great force out of his own kingdom, on the eastern shores of the *Severn*, to levy contributions in the country to the westward, where, as the pleasure of his company had been altogether unlooked for, he had got possession of a good portion of moveable property. The castle of *Dinas Vawr* presenting itself to him as a convenient hold, he had taken it by storm; and having cut the throats of the former occupants, thrown their bodies into the *Towy*, and caused a mass to be sung for the good of their souls, he was now sitting over his bowl, with the comfort of a good conscience, enjoying the fruits of the skill and courage with which he had planned and accomplished his scheme of ways and means for the year.

THE MISFORTUNES OF ELPHIN 137

The hall of Melvas was full of magnanimous heroes,
who were celebrating their own exploits in sundry
chorusses, especially in that which tollows, which is
here put upon record as being the quintessence of
all the war-songs that ever were written, and the
sum and substance of all the appetencies, tendencies,
and consequences of military glory :

THE WAR-SONG OF DINAS VAWR

The mountain sheep are sweeter,
But the valley sheep are fatter ,
We therefore deemed it meet
To carry off the latter
We made an expedition ,
We met a host, and quelled it ,
We forced a strong position,
And killed the men who held it

On Dyfed's richest valley,
Where herds of kine were brousing,
We made a mighty sally,
To furnish our carousing
Fierce warriors rushed to meet us ,
We met them, and o'erthrew them
They struggled hard to beat us ,
But we conquered them, and slew them.

As we drove our prize at leisure,
The king marched forth to catch us
His rage surpassed all measure,
But his people could not match us
He fled to his hall-pillars ,
And, ere our force we led off,
Some sacked his house and cellars,
While others cut his head off

We there, in strife bewild'ring,
Spilt blood enough to swim in .
We orphaned many childien,
And widowed many women
The eagles and the ravens
We glutted with our foemen ,
The heroes and the cravens,
The spearmen and the bowmen

We brought away from battle,
And much their land bemoaned them,
Two thousand head of cattle,
And the head of him who owned them
Ednyfed, king of Dyfed,
His head was borne before us ,
His wine and beasts supplied our feasts,
And his overthrow, our chorus.

As the doughty followers of Melvas, having sung themselves hoarse with their own praises, subsided one by one into drunken sleep, Taliesin, sitting near the great central fire, and throwing around a scrutinizing glance on all the objects in the hall, noticed a portly and somewhat elderly personage, of an aspect that would have been venerable, if it had been less rubicund and Bacchic, who continued plying his potations with undiminished energy, while the heroes of the festival dropped round him, like the leaves of autumn. This figure excited Taliesin's curiosity. The features struck him with a sense of resemblance to objects which had been somewhere familiar to him, but he perplexed himself in vain, with attempts at definite recollections. At length, when these two were almost the sole survivors of the evening, the stranger approached him with a golden goblet, which he had just replenished with the choicest wine of the vaults of Dinas Vawr, and pronounced the oracular monosyllable, "Drink!" to which he subjoined emphatically "GWIN O EUR. Wine from gold That is my taste Ale is well, mead is better; wine is best. Horn is well, silver is better, gold is best."

Taliesin, who had been very abstemious during the evening, took the golden goblet, and drank to please the inviter; in the hope that he would become communicative, and satisfy the curiosity his appearance had raised.

The stranger sat down near him evidently in that amiable state of semi-intoxication which inflates the

head, warms the heart, lifts up the veil of the inward man, and sets the tongue flying, or rather tripping, in the double sense of nimbleness and titubancy

The stranger repeated, taking a copious draught, "My taste is wine from gold"

"I have heard those words," said Tahesin, "GWIN O EUR, repeated as having been the favourite saying of a person whose memory is fondly cherished by one as dear to me as a mother, though his name, with all others, is the by-word of all that is disreputable"

"I cannot believe," said the stranger, "that a man whose favourite saying was GWIN O EUR, could possibly be a disreputable person, or deserve any other than that honourable remembrance, which, you say, only one person is honest enough to entertain for him."

"His name," said Tahesin, "is too unhappily notorious throughout Britain, by the terrible catastrophe of which his GWIN O EUR was the cause"

"And what might that be?" said the stranger

"The inundation of Gwaelod," said Tahesin.

"You speak then," said the stranger, taking an enormous potation, "of Seithenyn, Prince Seithenyn, Seithenyn ap Seithin Said, Arglwyd Gorwarcheidwad yr Argae Breninawl"

"I seldom hear his name," said Tahesin, "with any of those sounding additions, he is usually called Seithenyn the Drunkard"

The stranger goggled about his eyes in an attempt to fix them steadily on Tahesin, screwed up the corners of his mouth, stuck out his nether lip, pursed up his chin, thrust forward his right foot, and elevated his golden goblet in his right hand; then, in a tone which he intended to be strongly becoming of his impressive aspect and imposing attitude, he muttered, "Look at me"

Tahesin looked at him accordingly, with as much gravity as he could preserve.

After a silence, which he designed to be very dignified and solemn, the stranger spoke again
"I am the man"

"What man?" said Tahesin

"The man," replied his entertainer, "of whom you have spoken so disparagingly, Seithenyn ap Seithyn Saidi"

"Seithenyn," said Tahesin, "has slept twenty years under the waters of the western sea, as King Gwythno's Lamentations have made known to all Britain."

"They have not made it known to me," said Seithenyn, "for the best of all reasons, that one can only know the truth, for, if that which we think we know is not truth, it is something which we do not know. A man cannot know his own death; for, while he knows any thing, he is alive, at least, I never heard of a dead man who knew any thing, or pretended to know any thing if he had so pretended, I should have told him to his face he was no dead man"

"Your mode of reasoning," said Tahesin, "unquestionably corresponds with what I have heard of Seithenyn's but how is it possible Seithenyn can be living?"

"Every thing that is, is possible, says Catog the Wise;" answered Seithenyn, with a look of great sapience. "I will give you proof that I am not a dead man; for, they say, dead men tell no tales now I will tell you a tale, and a very interesting one it is When I saw the sea sapping the tower, I jumped into the water, and just in the nick of time It was well for me that I had been so provident as to empty so many barrels, and that somebody, I don't know who, but I suppose it was my daughter, had been so provident as to put the bungs into them, to keep them sweet, for the beauty of it was that, when there was so much water in the case, it kept them empty; and when I jumped into the sea, the

sea was just making a great hole in the cellar, and they were floating out by dozens. I don't know how I managed it, but I got one arm over one, and the other arm over another. I nipped them pretty tight, and, though my legs were under water, the good liquor I had in me kept me warm. I could not help thinking, as I had nothing else to think of just then that touched me so nearly, that if I had left them full, and myself empty, as a sober man would have done, we should all three, that is, I and the two barrels, have gone to the bottom together, that is to say, separately, for we should never have come together, except at the bottom, perhaps, when no one of us could have done the other any good; whereas they have done me much good, and I have requited it, for, first, I did them the service of emptying them; and then they did me the service of floating me with the tide, whether the ebb, or the flood, or both, is more than I can tell, down to the coast of Dyfed, where I was picked up by fishermen; and such was my sense of gratitude, that, though I had always before detested an empty barrel, except as a trophy, I swore I would not budge from the water unless my two barrels went with me, so we were all marched inland together, and were taken into the service of King Ednyfed, where I stayed till his castle was sacked, and his head cut off, and his beeves marched away with, by the followers of King Melvas, of whom I killed two or three, but they were too many for us. therefore, to make the best of a bad bargain, I followed leisurely in the train of the beeves, and presented myself to King Melvas, with this golden goblet, saying GWIN O EUR. He was struck with my deportment, and made me his chief butler; and now my two barrels are the two pillars of his cellar, where I regularly fill them from affection, and as regularly empty them from gratitude, taking care to put the bungs in them, to keep them sweet."

"But all this while," said Taliesin, "did you never look back to the Plain of Gwaelod, to your old king, and, above all, to your daughter?"

"Why yes," said Seithenyn, "I did in a way! But as to the Plain of Gwaelod, that was gone, buried under the sea, along with many good barrels, which I had been improvident enough to leave full then, as to the old king, though I had a great regard for him, I thought he might be less likely to feast me in his hall, than to set up my head on a spike over his gate: then, as to my daughter——"

Here he shook his head, and looked maudlin, and dashing two or three drops from his eye, he put a great many into his mouth.

"Your daughter," said Taliesin, "is the wife of King Elphin, and has a daughter, who is now as beautiful as her mother was."

"Very likely," said Seithenyn, "and I should be very glad to see them all, but I am afraid King Elphin, as you call him, (what he is king of, you shall tell me at leisure,) would do me a mischief. At any rate, he would stint me in liquor. No! If they will visit me, here I am. Fish, and water, will not agree with me. I am growing old, and need cordial nutriment. King Melvas will never want for beeves and wine, nor, indeed, for any thing else that is good. I can tell you what," he added, in a very low voice, cocking his eye, and putting his finger on his lips, "he has got in this very castle the finest woman in Britain."

"That I doubt," said Taliesin.

"She is the greatest, at any rate," said Seithenyn, "and ought to be the finest."

"How the greatest?" said Taliesin.

Seithenyn looked round, to observe if there were any listener near, and fixed a very suspicious gaze on a rotund figure of a fallen hero, who lay coiled up like a maggot in a filbert, and snoring with an energy

that, to the muddy apprehensions of Seithenyn, seemed to be counterfeit. He determined, by a gentle experiment, to ascertain if his suspicions were well founded; and proceeded, with what he thought great caution, to apply the point of his foot to the most bulging portion of the fat sleeper's circumference. But he greatly miscalculated his intended impetus, for he impinged his foot with a force that overbalanced himself, and hurled him headlong over his man, who instantly sprang on his legs, shouting "To arms!" Numbers started up at the cry; the hall rang with the din of arms, and with the vociferation of questions, which there were many to ask, and none to answer. Some stared about for the enemy; some rushed to the gates; others to the walls. Two or three, reeling in the tumult and the darkness, were jostled over the parapet, and went rolling down the precipitous slope of the castle hill, crashing through the bushes, and bellowing for some one to stop them, till their clamours were cut short by a plunge into the Towy, where the conjoint weight of their armour and their liquor carried them at once to the bottom. The rage which would have fallen on the enemy, if there had been one, was turned against the author of the false alarm; but, as none could point him out, the tumult subsided by degrees, through a descending scale of imprecations, into the last murmured malediction of him whom the intensity of his generous anger kept longest awake. By this time, the rotund hero had again coiled himself up into his ring; and Seithenyn was stretched in a right line, as a tangent to the circle, in a state of utter incapacity to elucidate the mystery of King Melvas's possession of the finest woman in Britain.

[Elphin, however, knowing that Queen Gwenyvar has been carried off by an unknown marauder, guesses

the secret, and asks this question in Arthur's hall, kneeling before the King —]

"What boon will King Arthur grant to him who brings news of his queen?"

"Any boon," said Arthur, "that a king can give."

"Queen Gwenyvar," said Taliesin, "is the prisoner of King Melvas, in the castle of Dinas Vawr."

The mien and countenance of his informant satisfied the king that he knew what he was saying, therefore, without further parance, he broke up the banquet, to make preparations for assailing Dinas Vawr.

But, before he began his march, King Melvas had shifted his quarters, and passed beyond the Severn to the isle of Avallon, where the marshes and winter-floods assured him some months of tranquillity and impunity.

King Arthur was highly exasperated, on receiving the intelligence of Melvas's movement, but he had no remedy, and was reduced to the alternative of making the best of his Christmas with the ladies, princes, and bards who crowded his court.

[Taliesin, hoping to please Arthur by obtaining the peaceable surrender of Gwenyvar from King Melvas, seeks the mediation of the abbot of Avallon, and is admitted to the abbey by a monk with a face "as round and as red as the setting sun in November"]

The monk, desiring Taliesin to follow him, led the way across the hall of the abbey, and along a short wide passage, at the end of which was a portly door.

The monk disappeared through this door, and, presently returning, said, "The abbot requires your name and quality."

"Talesin, the bard of Elphin ap Gwythno Garanhir," was the reply.

The monk disappeared again, and, returning, after a longer pause than before, said, "You may enter"

The abbot was a plump and comely man, of middle age, having three roses in his complexion; one in full blossom on each cheek, and one in bud on the tip of his nose

He was sitting at a small table, on which stood an enormous vase, and a golden goblet, and opposite to him sat the penitent of whom the round-faced brother had spoken, and in whom Talesin recognised his acquaintance of Dinas Vawr, who called himself Seithenyn ap Seithyn

The abbot and Seithenyn sat with their arms folded on the table, leaning forward towards each other, as if in momentous discussion.

The abbot said to Talesin, "Sit," and to his conductor, "Retire, and be silent"

"Will it not be better," said the monk, "that I cross my lips with the sign of secrecy?"

"It is permitted," said the abbot

Seithenyn held forth the goblet to the monk, who swallowed the contents with much devotion. He then withdrew, and closed the door

"I bid you most heartily welcome," said Seithenyn to Talesin "Drink off this, and I will tell you more. You are admitted to this special sitting at my special instance I told the abbot I knew you well. Now I will tell you what I know You have told King Arthur that King Melvas has possession of Queen Gwenyvar, and, in consequence, King Arthur is coming here, to sack and raze the castle and abbey, and cut every throat in the i-le of Avallon I have just brought the abbot this pleasant intelligence, and, as I knew it would take him down a cup or two, I have also brought what I call my little jug, to have the benefit of his judgment on a piece of rare wine

which I have broached this morning: there is no better in *Caer Lleon*. And now we are holding council on the emergency. But I must say you abuse your bardic privilege, to enjoy people's hospitality, worm out their secrets, and carry the news to the enemy. It was partly to give you this candid opinion, that I have prevailed on the abbot to admit you to this special sitting. Therefore drink. *GWIN O EUR Wine from gold*"

"King Arthur is not a Saxon, at any rate," sighed the abbot, winding up his fainting spirits with a draught. "Think not, young stranger, that I am transgressing the laws of temperance my blood runs so cold when I think of the bloodthirsty Saxons, that I take a little wine medicinally, in the hope of warming it, but it is a slow and tedious remedy"

"Take a little more," said *Seithenyn*. "That is the true quantity Wine in my medicine, and my quantity is a little more. A little more"

"King Arthur," said *Talesin*, "is not a Saxon, but he does not brook injuries lightly. It were better for your abbey that he came not here in arms. The aiders and abettors of *Melvas*, even though they be spiritual, may not carry off the matter without some share of his punishment, which is infallible."

"That is just what I have been thinking," said *Seithenyn*.

"God knows," said the abbot, "we are not abettors of *Melvas*, though we need his temporal power to protect us from the Saxons"

"How can it be otherwise," said *Talesin*, "than that these Saxon despoilers should be insolent and triumphant, while the princes of Britain are distracted with domestic brouls: and for what?"

"Ay," said *Seithenyn*, "that is the point. For what? For a woman, or some such rubbish"

"Rubbish, most verily," said the abbot "Women are the flesh which we renounce with the devil."

"Holy father," said Taliesin, "have you not spiritual influence with Melvas, to persuade him to surrender the queen without bloodshed, and, renewing his allegiance to Arthur, assist him in his most sacred war against the Saxon invaders?"

"A righteous work," said the abbot; "but Melvas is headstrong and difficult."

"Screw yourself up with another goblet," said Seithenyn, "you will find the difficulty smooth itself off wonderfully. Wine from gold has a sort of double light, that illuminates a dark path miraculously."

The abbot sighed deeply, but adopted Seithenyn's method of throwing light on the subject.

"The anger of King Arthur," said Taliesin, "is certain, and its consequences infallible. The anger of King Melvas is doubtful, and its consequences to you cannot be formidable."

"That is nearly true," said the abbot, beginning to look resolute, as the rosebud at his nose-tip deepened into damask.

"A little more," said Seithenyn, "and it will become quite true."

By degrees the proposition ripened into absolute truth. The abbot suddenly inflated his cheeks, started on his legs, and stalked bolt upright out of the apartment, and forthwith out of the abbey, followed by Seithenyn, tossing his goblet in the air and catching it in his hand, as he went.

The round-faced brother made his appearance almost immediately. "The abbot," he said, "commends you to the hospitality of the brotherhood. They will presently assemble to supper. In the meanwhile, as I am thirsty, and content with whatever falls in my way, I will take a simple and single draught of what happens to be here."

His draught was a model of simplicity and singleness, for, having uplifted the ponderous vase, he

held it to his lips, till he had drained it of the very copious remnant which the abrupt departure of the abbot had caused Seithenyn to leave in it.

Taliesin proceeded to enjoy the hospitality of the brethren, who set before him a very comfortable hot supper, at which he quickly perceived, that, however dexterous King Elphin might be at catching fish, the monks of Avallon were very far his masters in the three great arts of cooking it, serving it up, and washing it down, but he had not time to profit by their skill and experience in these matters, for he received a pressing invitation to the castle of Melvas, which he obeyed immediately.

"Friend Seithenyn," said the abbot, when, having passed the castle gates, and solicited an audience, he was proceeding to the presence of Melvas, "this task, to which I have accinged myself, is arduous, and in some degree awful, being, in truth, no less than to persuade a king to surrender a possession, which he has inclination to keep for ever, and power to keep, at any rate, for an indefinite time"

"Not so very indefinite," said Seithenyn, "for with the first song of the cuckoo (whom I mention on this occasion as a party concerned,) King Arthur will batter his castle about his ears, and, in all likelihood, the abbey about yours"

The abbot sighed heavily.

"If your heart fail you," said Seithenyn, "another cup of wine will set all to rights"

"Nay, nay, friend Seithenyn," said the abbot, "that which I have already taken has just brought me to the point at which the heart is inspirited, and the wit sharpened, without any infraction of the wisdom and gravity which become my character, and best suit my present business."

Seithenyn, however, took an opportunity of making signs to some cupbearers, and, when they entered

the apartment of Melvas, they were followed by vessels of wine and goblets of gold

King Melvas was a man of middle age, with a somewhat round, large, regular-featured face, and an habitual smile of extreme self-satisfaction, which he could occasionally convert into a look of terrific ferocity, the more fearful for being rare. His manners were, for the most part, pleasant. He did much mischief, not for mischief's sake, nor yet for the sake of excitement, but for the sake of something tangible. He had a total and most complacent indifference to every thing but his own will and pleasure. He took what he wanted wherever he could find it, by the most direct process, and without any false pretence. He would have disdained the trick which the chroniclers ascribe to Hengist, of begging as much land as a bull's hide would surround, and then shaving it into threads, which surrounded a goodly space. If he wanted a piece of land, he encamped upon it, saying, "This is mine." If the former possessor could eject him, so, it was not his; if not, so, it remained his. Cattle, wine, furniture, another man's wife, whatever he took a fancy to, he pounced upon and appropriated. He was intolerant of resistance, and, as the shortest way of getting rid of it, and not from any blood-thirstiness of disposition, or, as the phrenologists have it, development of the organ of destructiveness, he always cut through the resisting body, longitudinally, horizontally, or diagonally, as he found most convenient. He was the rich-marauder of West Britain. The abbey of Avallon shared largely in the spoil, and they made up together a most harmonious church and state. He had some respect for King Arthur; wished him success against the Saxons, knew the superiority of his power to his own; but he had heard that Queen Gwenyvar was the most beautiful woman in Britain, was, therefore, satisfied

of his own title to her, and, as she was hunting in the forest, while King Arthur was absent from Caerlleon, he seized her, and carried her off.

"Be seated, holy father," said Melvas; "and you, also, Seithenyn, unless the abbot wishes you away."

But the abbot's heart misgave him, and he assented readily to Seithenyn's stay.

MELVAS.

Now, holy father, to your important matter of private conference.

SEITHENYN.

He is tongue-tied, and a cup too low.

THE ABBOT

Set the goblet before me, and I will sip in moderation

MELVAS.

Sip, or not sip, tell me your business.

THE ABBOT.

My business, of a truth, touches the lady your prisoner, King Arthur's queen.

MELVAS.

She is my queen, while I have her, and no prisoner. Drink, man, and be not afraid. Speak your mind I will listen, and weigh your words.

THE ABBOT.

This queen——

SEITHENYN.

Obey the king : first drink, then speak.

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THE ABBOT

I drink to please the king.

MELVAS

Proceed

THE ABBOT.

This queen, Gwenyvar, is as beautiful as Helen, who caused the fatal war that expelled our forefathers from Troy and I fear she will be a second Helen, and expel their posterity from Britain.¹ The infidel Saxons, to whom the cowardly and perfidious Vortigern gave footing in Britain, have prospered even more by the disunion of her princes than either by his villany, or their own valour. And now there is no human hope against them but in the arms of Arthur. And how shall his arms prosper against the common enemy, if he be forced to turn them on the children of his own land for the recovery of his own wife?

MELVAS

What do you mean by his own? That which he has, is his own but that which I have, is mine. I have the wife in question, and some of the land. Therefore they are mine.

THE ABBOT

Not so. The land is yours under fealty to him.

MELVAS

As much fealty as I please, or he can force me, to give him.

¹ According to the British Chronicles, Brutus, the great grandson of Æneas, having killed his father, Silvius, to fulfil a prophecy, went to Greece, where he found the posterity of Helenus, the son of Priam; collected all of the Trojan race within the limits of Greece, and, after some adventures by land and sea, settled them in Britain, which was before uninhabited, 'except by a few giants.'

THE ABBOT.

His wife, at least, is most lawfully his.

MELVAS.

The winner makes the law, and his law is always against the loser I am so far the winner, and by my own law, she is lawfully mine

THE ABBOT.

There is a law above all human law, by which she is his

MELVAS

From that it is for you to absolve me; and I dispense my bounty according to your indulgence.

THE ABBOT.

There are limits we must not pass

MELVAS.

You set up your landmark, and I set up mine. They are both moveable.

THE ABBOT

The Church has not been niggardly in its indulgences to King Melvas.

MELVAS.

Nor King Melvas in his gifts to the Church

THE ABBOT.

But, setting aside this consideration, I would treat it as a question of policy.

SEITHENYN

Now you talk sense Right without might is the lees of an old barrel, without a drop of the original liquor.

THE ABBOT.

I would appeal to you, King Melvas, by your love to your common country, by your love of the name of Britain, by your hatred of the infidel Saxons, by your respect for the character of Arthur, will you let your passion for a woman, even though she be a second Helen, frustrate, or even unpede, the great cause, of driving these spoilers from a land in which they have no right even to breathe?

MELVAS.

They have a right to do all they do, and to have all they have. If we can drive them out, they will then have no right here Have not you and I a right to this good wine, which seems to trip very merrily over your ghostly palate? I got it by seizing a good ship, and throwing the crew overboard, just to remove them out of the way, because they were troublesome. They disputed my right, but I taught them better I taught them a great moral lesson, though they had not much time to profit by it If they had had the might to throw me overboard, I should not have troubled myself about their right, any more, or, at any rate, any longer, than they did about mine.

SEITHENYN

The wine was lawful spoil of war.

THE ABBOT

But if King Arthur brings his might to bear upon

yours I fear neither you nor I shall have a right to this wine, nor to any thing else that is here.

SEITHENYN.

Then make the most of it while you have it.

THE ABBOT.

Now, while you have some months of security before you, you may gain great glory by surrendering the lady, and, if you be so disposed, you may no doubt claim, from the gratitude of King Arthur, the fairest princess of his court to wife, and an ample dower withal

MELVAS.

That offers something tangible.

SEITHENYN

Another ray from the golden goblet will set it in a most luminous view.

THE ABBOT

Though I should advise the not making it a condition, but asking it, as a matter of friendship, after the first victory that you have helped him to gain over the Saxons.

MELVAS.

The worst of those Saxons is, that they offer nothing tangible, except hard knocks. They bring nothing with them. They come to take; and lately they have not taken much. But I will muse on your advice; and, as it seems, I may get more by following than rejecting it, I shall very probably take it,

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provided that you now attend me to the banquet in the hall

SEITHENYN.

Now you talk of the hall and the banquet, I will just intimate that the finest of all youths, and the best of all bards, is a guest in the neighbouring abbey.

MELVAS

If so, I have a clear right to him, as a guest for myself.

The abbot was not disposed to gainsay King Melvas's right. Takesin was invited accordingly, and seated at the left hand of the king, the abbot being on the right. Takesin summoned all the energies of his genius to turn the passions of Melvas into the channels of Anti-Saxonism, and succeeded so perfectly, that the king and his whole retinue of magnanimous heroes were inflamed with intense ardour to join the standard of Arthur, and Melvas vowed most solemnly to Takesin, that another sun should not set, before Queen Gwenyvar should be under the most honourable guidance on her return to Caer Lleon

King Arthur had not long returned to his hall, when Queen Gwenyvar arrived, escorted by the Abbot of Avallon and Seithenyn ap Seithyn Sardi, who had brought his golden goblet, to gain a new harvest of glory from the cellars of Caer Lleon

Seithenyn assured King Arthur, in the name of King Melvas, and on the word of a king, backed by that of his butler, which, truth being in wine, is good warranty even for a king, that the queen returned

as pure as on the day King Melvas had carried her off.

"None here will doubt that," said Gwenvach, the wife of Modred. Gwenvach was not pleased with the compliment, and, almost before she had saluted King Arthur, she turned suddenly round, and slapped Gwenvach on the face, with a force that brought more crimson into one cheek than blushing had ever done into both. This slap is recorded in the Bardic Triads as one of the Three Fatal Slaps of the Island of Britain. A terrible effect is ascribed to this small cause; for it is said to have been the basis of that enmity between Arthur and Modred, which terminated in the battle of Camlan, wherein all the flower of Britain perished on both sides—a catastrophe more calamitous than any that ever before or since happened in Christendom, not even excepting that of the battle of Roncevalles, for, in the battle of Camlan, the Britons exhausted their own strength, and could no longer resist the progress of the Saxon supremacy. This, however, was a later result, and comes not within the scope of the present veridical narrative.

Gwenvach having flounced out of the hall, and the tumult occasioned by this little incident having subsided, Queen Gwenvach took her ancient seat by the side of King Arthur, who proceeded to inquire into the circumstances of her restoration. The Abbot of Avallon began an oration, in praise of his own eloquence, and its miraculous effects on King Melvas, but he was interrupted by Seithenyn, who said, "The abbot's eloquence was good and well timed; but the chief merit belongs to this young bard, who prompted him with good counsel, and to me, who inspirited him with good liquor. If he had not opened his mouth pretty widely when I handed him this golden goblet, exclaiming GWIN O EUR, he would never have had the heart to open it to any

other good purpose. But the most deserving person is this very promising youth, in whom I can see no fault, but that he has not the same keen perception as my friend the abbot has of the excellent relish of wine from gold. To be sure, he pled me very hard with strong drink in the hall of Dinas Vawr, and thereby wormed out of me the secret of Queen Gwenyvar's captivity, and, afterwards, he pursued us to Avallon, where he persuaded me and the abbot, and the abbot persuaded King Melvas, that it would be better for all parties to restore the queen peaceably and then he clenched the matter with the very best song I ever heard in my life. And, as my young friend has a boon to ask, I freely give him all my share of the merit, and the abbot's into the bargain "

"Allow me, friend GWIN O EUR," said the abbot, "to dispose of my own share of merit in my own way. But, such as it is, I freely give it to this youth, in whom, as you say, I can see no fault, but that his head is brimfull of Pagan knowledge "

Arthur paid great honour to Taliesin, and placed him on his left hand at the banquet. He then said to him, "I judge, from your song of this morning, that the boon you require from me concerns Maelgon Gwyneth. What is his transgression, and what is the justice you require ? "

Taliesin narrated the adventures of Elphin in such a manner as gave Arthur an insight into his affection for Melanghel; and he supplicated King Arthur to command and enforce the liberation of Elphin from the Stone Tower of Diganwy.

[Arthur granted the boon, gave a magnificent dowry to Melanghel, and caused Maelgon to defray the charge of her wedding with Taliesin]

At a subsequent Bardic Congress, Taliesin ~~was~~

unanimously elected Pen Beirdd, or Chief of the Bards of Britain. The kingdom of Caredigion flourished under the protection of Arthur, and, in the ripeness of time, passed into the hands of Avaon, the son of Taliesin and Melanghel.

CROTCHET CASTLE

[*Doctor Folliott has been dining at Crotchet Castle, and discussing with his host a statue of the Sleeping Venus on the mantelpiece. He has also accused Mr Eavesdrop (a "sort of bookseller's tool," who "coins all his acquaintance in reminiscences and sketches of character") of dishing him up, like a savory omelette, to gratify the appetite of the reading rabble for gossip, and has threatened to chastise him with his bamboo — "Sir, you have published a character of your facetious friend, the Reverend Doctor F, wherein you have sketched off me, me, sir, even to my nose and wig. What business have the public with my nose and wig?"*]

THE Reverend Doctor Folliott took his departure about ten o'clock, to walk home to his vicarage. There was no moon, but the night was bright and clear, and afforded him as much light as he needed. He paused a moment by the Roman camp, to listen to the nightingale, repeated to himself a passage of Sophocles, proceeded through the park gate, and entered the narrow lane that led to the village. He walked on in a very pleasant mood of the state called *reverie*, in which fish and wine, Greek and political economy, the Sleeping Venus he had left behind and poor dear Mrs Folliott, to whose fond arms he was returning, passed as in a *camera obscura* over the tablets of his imagination. Presently the image of Mr Eavesdrop, with a printed sketch of the Reverend Doctor F, presented itself before him, and he began mechanically to flourish his bamboo. The movement was prompted by his good-genius, for the uplifted bamboo received the blow of a ponderous cudgel, which was intended for him.

head. The reverend gentleman recoiled two or three paces, and saw before him a couple of ruffians, who were preparing to renew the attack, but whom, with two swings of his bamboo, he laid with cracked sconces on the earth, where he proceeded to deal with them like corn beneath the flail of the thresher. One of them drew a pistol, which went off in the very act of being struck aside by the bamboo, and lodged a bullet in the brain of the other. There was then only one enemy, who vainly struggled to rise, every effort being attended with a new and more signal prostration. The fellow roared for mercy "Mercy, rascal!" cried the divine, "what mercy were you going to show me, villain? What! I warrant me, you thought it would be an easy matter, and no sin, to rob and murder a parson on his way home from dinner. You said to yourself, doubtless, 'We'll waylay the fat parson (you irreverent knave) as he waddles home (you disparaging ruffian), half-sea-over (you calumnious vagabond)'" And with every dyslogistic term, which he supposed had been applied to himself, he inflicted a new bruise on his rolling and roaring antagonist "Ah, rogue!" he proceeded; "you can roar now, marauder; you were silent enough when you devoted my brains to dispersion under your cudgel. But seeing that I cannot bind you, and that I intend you not to escape, and that it would be dangerous to let you rise, I will disable you in all your members, I will contund you as *Thestylis* did strong-smelling herbs,¹ in the quality whereof you do most gravely partake, as my nose beareth testimony, ill weed that you are. I will beat you to a jelly, and I will then roll you into the ditch, to lie till the constable comes for you, thief."

¹ *Thestylis*

. *herbas contundit olentes*

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"Hold! hold! reverend sir," exclaimed the penitent culprit, "I am disabled already in every finger, and in every joint I will roll myself into the ditch, reverend sir."

"Stir not, rascal," returned the divine, "stir not so much as the quietest leaf above you, or my bamboo rebounds on your body like hail in a thunder storm. Confess speedily, villain, are you simple thief, or would you have manufactured me into a subject, for the benefit of science? Ay, miscreant catiff, you would have made me a subject for science, would you? You are a schoolmaster abroad, are you? You are marching with a detachment of the march of mind, are you? You are a member of the Steam Intellect Society, are you? You swear by the learned friend, do you?"

"Oh, no! reverend sir," answered the criminal, "I am innocent of all these offences, whatever they are, reverend sir. The only friend I had in the world is lying dead beside me, reverend sir."

The reverend gentleman paused a moment, and leaned on his bamboo. The culprit, bruised as he was, sprang on his legs, and went off in double quick time. The doctor gave him chase, and had nearly brought him within arm's length, when the fellow turned at right angles, and sprang clean over a deep dry ditch. The divine, following with equal ardour, and less dexterity, went down over head and ears into a thicket of nettles. Emerging with much discomposure, he proceeded to the village, and roused the constable, but the constable found, on reaching the scene of action, that the dead man was gone, as well as his living accomplice.

"Oh, the monster!" exclaimed the Reverend Doctor Folliott, "he has made a subject for science of the only friend he had in the world." "Ay, my dear," he resumed, the next morning at breakfast, "if my old reading, and my early gymnastics (for as

the great Hermann says, before I was demulced by the Muses, I was *ferocis ingenii puer, et ad arma quam ad literas paratior*¹), had not imbued me indelibly with some of the holy rage of *Frère Jean des Entommeures*, I should be, at this moment, lying on the table of some flinty-hearted anatomist, who would have sliced and disjointed me as unscrupulously as I do these remnants of the capon and chine, wherewith you consoled yourself yesterday for my absence at dinner Phew! - I have a noble thirst upon me, which I will quench with floods of tea."

The reverend gentleman was interrupted by a messenger, who informed him that the Charity Commissioners requested his presence at the inn, where they were holding a sitting.

"The Charity Commissioners!" exclaimed the reverend gentleman, "who on earth are they?"

The messenger could not inform him, and the reverend gentleman took his hat and stick, and proceeded to the inn.

On entering the best parlour, he saw three well-dressed and bulky gentlemen sitting at a table, and a fourth officiating as clerk, with an open book before him, and a pen in his hand. The churchwardens who had been also summoned, were already in attendance.

The chief commissioner politely requested the reverend Doctor Folliott to be seated, and after the usual meteorological preliminaries had been settled by a resolution, *nem con*, that it was a fine day but very hot, the chief commissioner stated, that in virtue of the commission of Parliament, which they had the honour to hold, they were now to inquire into the state of the public charities of this village.

¹ 'A boy of fierce disposition, more inclined to arms than to letters'—Hermann's *Dedication of Homer's Hymns to his Preceptor Ilgen*

THE REV. DR FOLLIOTT.

The state of the public charities, sir, is exceedingly simple. There are none. The charities here are all private, and so private, that I for one know nothing of them.

FIRST COMMISSIONER

We have been informed, sir, that there is an annual rent charged on the land of Hautbois, for the endowment and repair of an almshouse.

THE REV. DR FOLLIOTT.

Hautbois ! Hautbois !

FIRST COMMISSIONER

The manorial farm of Hautbois, now occupied by Farmer Seedling, is charged with the endowment and maintenance of an almshouse.

THE REV. DR FOLLIOTT (*to the Churchwarden*).

How is this, Mr. Bluenose ?

FIRST CHURCHWARDEN

I really do not know, sir. What say you, Mr. Appletwig ?

MR. APPLETWIG (*parish-clerk and schoolmaster ; an old man*)

I do remember, gentlemen, to have been informed that there did stand at the end of the village a ruined cottage, which had once been an almshouse, which was endowed and maintained, by an annual revenue of a mark and a half, or one pound sterling, charged some centuries ago on the farm of Hautbois, but the means, by the progress of time, having become

inadequate to the end, the almshouse tumbled to pieces.

FIRST COMMISSIONER

But this is a right which cannot be abrogated by desuetude, and the sum of one pound per annum is still chargeable for charitable purposes on the manorial farm of Hautbois.

THE REV DR FOLLIOTT

Very well, sir

MR APPLETWIG

But sir, the one pound per annum is still received by the parish, but was long ago, by an unanimous vote in open vestry, given to the minister.

THE THREE COMMISSIONERS (*unâ voce*).

The minister !

FIRST COMMISSIONER.

This is an unjustifiable proceeding.

SECOND COMMISSIONER

A misappropriation of a public fund

THIRD COMMISSIONER.

A flagrant perversion of a charitable donation

THE REV DR FOLLIOTT

God bless my soul, gentlemen ! I know nothing of this matter How is this, Mr Bluenose ? Do I receive this one pound per annum ?

FIRST CHURCHWARDEN

Really, sir, I know no more about it than you do.

MR APPLETWIG

You certainly receive it, sir It was voted to one of your predecessors. Farmer Seedling lumps it in with his tithes

FIRST COMMISSIONER.

Lumps it in, sir ! Lump in a charitable donation !

SECOND AND THIRD COMMISSIONER

Oh-oh-oh-h-h !

FIRST COMMISSIONER.

Reverend sir, and gentlemen, officers of this parish, we are under the necessity of admonishing you that this is a most improper proceeding, and you are hereby duly admonished accordingly. Make a record, Mr. Milky.

MR MILKY (*writing*)

The clergyman and churchwardens of the village of Hm-m-m-m gravely admonished Hm-m-m-m.

THE REV DR. FOLLIOTT

Is that all, gentlemen ?

THE COMMISSIONERS

That is all, sir, and we wish you a good morning.

THE REV DR FOLLIOTT

A very good morning to you, gentlemen.

"What in the name of all that is wonderful, Mr. Bluenose," said the Reverend Doctor Follhott, as he walked out of the inn, "what in the name of all that is wonderful, can those fellows mean ? They have come here in a chaise and four, to make a fuss about a pound per annum, which, after all, they leave as it

was. I wonder who pays them for their trouble, and how much."

MR APPLETWIG

The public pay for it, sir. It is a job of the learned friend whom you admire so much. It makes away with public money in salaries, and private money in lawsuits, and does no particle of good to any living soul.

THE REV. DR. FOLLIOTT.

Ay, ay, Mr. Appletwig, that is just the sort of public service to be looked for from the learned friend. Oh, the learned friend! the learned friend! He is the evil genius of every thing that falls in his way.

[Mr Chainmail had taken up his quarters at an inn in a secluded village in the interior of Merionethshire, "the land of all that is beautiful in nature, and all that is lovely in woman."]

One day Mr Chainmail traced upwards the course of a mountain-stream, to a spot where a small waterfall threw itself over a slab of perpendicular rock, which seemed to bar his farther progress. On a nearer view, he discovered a flight of steps, roughly hewn in the rock, on one side of the fall. Ascending these steps, he entered a narrow winding pass, between high and naked rocks, that afforded only space for a rough footpath carved on one side, at some height above the torrent.

The pass opened on a lake, from which the stream issued, and which lay like a dark mirror, set in a gigantic frame of mountain precipices. Fragments of rock lay scattered on the edge of the lake, some half-buried in the water. Mr. Chainmail scrambled some way over these fragments, till the base of a rock,

sinking abruptly in the water, effectually barred his progress. He sat down on a large smooth stone ; the faint murmur of the stream he had quitted, the occasional flapping of the wings of the heron, and at long intervals the solitary springing of a trout, were the only sounds that came to his ear. The sun shone brightly half-way down the opposite rocks, presenting, on their irregular faces, strong masses of light and shade. Suddenly he heard the dash of a paddle, and, turning his eyes, saw a solitary and beautiful girl gliding over the lake in a coracle ; she was proceeding from the vicinity of the point he had quitted towards the upper end of the lake. Her apparel was rustic, but there was in its style something more *recherché*, in its arrangement something more of elegance and precision, than was common to the mountain peasant girl. It had more of the *contadina* of the opera than of the genuine mountaineer, so at least thought Mr. Chainmail, but she passed so rapidly, and took him so much by surprise, that he had little opportunity for accurate observation. He saw her land, at the farther extremity, and disappear among the rocks. He rose from his seat, returned to the mouth of the pass, stepped from stone to stone across the stream, and attempted to pass round by the other side of the lake, but there again the abruptly sinking precipice closed his way.

Day after day he haunted the spot, but never saw again either the damsel or the coracle. At length, marvelling at himself for being so solicitous about the apparition of a peasant girl in a coracle, who could not, by any possibility, be any thing to him, he resumed his explorations in another direction.

One day he wandered to the ruined castle, on the seashore, which was not very distant from his inn, and sitting on the rock, near the base of the ruin, was calling up the forms of past ages on the wall of an ivied tower, when on its summit appeared a female

figure, whom he recognised in an instant for his nymph of the coracle. The folds of the blue gown pressed by the sea breeze against one of the most symmetrical of figures, the black feather of the black hat, and the ringleted hair beneath it fluttering in the wind, the apparent peril of her position, on the edge of the mouldering wall, from whose immediate base the rock went down perpendicularly to the sea, presented a singularly interesting combination to the eye of the young antiquary.

Mr Chainmail had to pass half round the castle, on the land side, before he could reach the entrance he coasted the dry and bramble-grown moat, crossed the unguarded bridge, passed the unportcullised arch of the gateway, entered the castle court, ascertained the tower, ascended the broken stairs, and stood on the ivied wall. But the nymph of the place was gone. He searched the ruins within and without, but he found not what he sought. He haunted the castle day after day, as he had done the lake, but the damsel appeared no more.

Miss Susannah Touchandgo had read the four great poets of Italy, and many of the best writers of France. About the time of her father's downfall, accident threw into her way *Les Réveries du Promeneur Solitaire*, and from the impression which these made on her, she carried with her into retirement all the works of Rousseau. In the midst of that startling light which the conduct of old friends on a sudden reverse of fortune throws on a young and inexperienced mind, the doctrines of the philosopher of Geneva struck with double force upon her sympathies. She imbibed the sweet poison, as somebody calls it, of his writings, even to a love of truth; which, every wise man knows, ought to be left to those who can get any thing by it. The society of children, the beauties of nature, the solitude of the mountains, became her

consolation, and, by degrees, her delight. The gay society from which she had been excluded remained on her memory only as a disagreeable dream. She imbibed her new monitor's ideas of simplicity of dress, assimilating her own with that of the peasant girls in the neighbourhood, the black hat, the blue gown, the black stockings, the shoes tied on the instep.

Pride was, perhaps, at the bottom of the change, she was willing to impose in some measure on herself, by marking a contemptuous indifference to the characteristics of the class of society from which she had fallen,

" And with the food of pride sustained her soul
In solitude "

It is true that she somewhat modified the forms of her rustic dress to the black hat she added a black feather, to the blue gown she added a tippet, and a waistband fastened in front with a silver buckle, she wore her black stockings very smooth and tight on her ancles, and tied her shoes in tasteful bows, with the nicest possible ribbon. In this apparel, to which, in winter, she added a scarlet cloak, she made dreadful havoc among the rustic mountaineers, many of whom proposed to " keep company " with her in the Cambrian fashion, an honour which, to their great surprise, she always declined. Among these, Harry Ap-Heather, whose father rented an extensive sheep-walk, and had a thousand she-lambs wandering in the mountains, was the most strenuous in his suit, and the most pathetic in his lamentations for her cruelty.

Miss Susannah often wandered among the mountains alone, even to some distance from the farm-house. Sometimes she descended into the bottom of the dingles, to the black rocky beds of the torrents, and dreamed away hours at the feet of

the cataracts One spot in particular, from which she had at first shrunk with terror, became by degrees her favourite haunt A path turning and returning at acute angles, led down a steep wood-covered slope to the edge of a chasm, where a pool, or resting-place of a torrent, lay far below A cataract fell in a single sheet into the pool, the pool boiled and bubbled at the base of the fall, but through the greater part of its extent lay calm, deep, and black, as if the cataract had plunged through it to an unimaginable depth without disturbing its eternal repose At the opposite extremity of the pool, the rocks almost met at their summits, the trees of the opposite banks intermingled their leaves, and another cataract plunged from the pool into a chasm on which the sunbeams never gleamed High above, on both sides, the steep woody slopes of the dingle soared into the sky, and from a fissure in the rock, on which the little path terminated, a single gnarled and twisted oak stretched itself over the pool, forming a fork with its boughs at a short distance from the rock Miss Susannah often sat on the rock, with her feet resting on this tree. in time, she made her seat on the tree itself, with her feet hanging over the abyss, and at length she accustomed herself to lie along upon its trunk, with her side on the mossy boll of the fork, and an arm round one of the branches From this position a portion of the sky and the woods was reflected in the pool, which, from its bank, was but a mass of darkness. The first time she reclined in this manner, her heart beat audibly, in time, she lay down as calmly as on the mountain heather. the perception of the sublime was probably heightened by an intermingled sense of danger, and perhaps that indifference to life, which early disappointment forces upon sensitive minds, was necessary to the first experiment. There was, in the novelty and strangeness of the position, an excitement which

never wholly passed away, but which became gradually subordinate to the influence, at once tranquillising and elevating, of the mingled eternity of motion, sound, and solitude.

One sultry noon, she descended into this retreat with a mind more than usually disturbed by reflections on the past. She lay in her favourite position, sometimes gazing on the cataract ; looking sometimes up the steep sylvan acclivities into the narrow space of the cloudless ether, sometimes down into the abyss of the pool, and the deep bright-blue reflections that opened another immensity below her. The distressing recollections of the morning, the world, and all its littlenesses, faded from her thoughts like a dream ; but her wounded and wearied spirit drank in too deeply the tranquillising power of the place, and she dropped asleep upon the tree like a ship-boy on the mast.

At this moment Mr Chainmail emerged into daylight, on a projection of the opposite rock, having struck down through the woods in search of unsophisticated scenery. The scene he discovered filled him with delight he seated himself on the rock, and fell into one of his romantic reveries, when suddenly the semblance of a black hat and feather caught his eye among the foliage of the projecting oak. He started up, shifted his position, and got a glimpse of a blue gown. It was his lady of the lake, his enchantress of the ruined castle, divided from him by a barrier, which, at a few yards below, he could almost overleap, yet unapproachable but by a circuit perhaps of many hours. He watched with intense anxiety to listen if she breathed was out of the question. The noses of a dean and chapter would have been soundless in the roar of the torrent. From her extreme stillness, she appeared to sleep. yet what creature, not desperate, would go wilfully to sleep in such a place ? Was she asleep then ? Nay, was she

alive ? She was as motionless as death. Had she been murdered, thrown from above, and caught in the tree ? She lay too regularly and too composedly for such a supposition. She was asleep then, and in all probability her waking would be fatal. He shifted his position. Below the pool two beetle-browed rocks nearly overarched the chasm, leaving just such a space at the summit as was within the possibility of a leap, the torrent roared below in a fearful gulf. He paused some time on the brink, measuring the practicability and the danger, and casting every now and then an anxious glance to his sleeping beauty. In one of these glances he saw a slight movement of the blue gown, and, in a moment after, the black hat and feather dropped into the pool. Reflection was lost for a moment, and, by a sudden impulse, he bounded over the chasm.

He stood above the projecting oak ; the unknown beauty lay like the nymph of the scene ; her long black hair, which the fall of her hat had disengaged from its fastenings, drooping through the boughs : he saw that the first thing to be done was to prevent her throwing her feet off the trunk, in the first movements of waking. He sat down on the rock, and placed his feet on the stem, securing her ankles between his own. One of her arms was round a branch of the fork, the other lay loosely on her side. The hand of this arm he endeavoured to reach, by leaning forward from his seat, he approximated, but could not touch it. After several tantalising efforts, he gave up the point in despair. He did not attempt to wake her, because he feared it might have bad consequences, and he resigned himself to expect the moment of her natural waking, determined not to stir from his post, if she should sleep till midnight.

In this period of forced inaction, he could contemplate at leisure the features and form of his charmer. She was not one of the slender beauties of romance,

she was as plump as a partridge, her cheeks were two roses, not absolutely damask, yet verging thereupon; her lips twin-cherries, of equal size, her nose regular, and almost Grecian, her forehead high, and delicately fair, her eyebrows symmetrically arched, her eyelashes long, black, and silky, fitly corresponding with the beautiful tresses that hung among the leaves of the oak, like clusters of wandering grapes. Her eyes were yet to be seen, but how could he doubt that their opening would be the rising of the sun, when all that surrounded their fringy portals was radiant as "the forehead of the morning sky?"

[When the lady awakes, Mr. Chainmail finds her "one of the most fascinating creatures under the canopy of heaven," and falls head over ears in love, as deep, he confesses, as Llyn-y-dreiddiad-vrawd, which he now describes.]

A pool not far off a resting-place of a mountain stream, which is said to have no bottom. There is a tradition connected with it, and here is a ballad on it, at your service:—

LLYN-Y-DREIDDIAD-VRAWD

THE POOL OF THE DIVING FRIAR

Gwenwynwyn withdrew from the feasts of his hall,
He slept very little, he prayed not at all,
He pondered, and wandered, and studied alone,
And sought, night and day, the philosopher's stone.

He found it at length, and he made its first proof
By turning to gold all the lead of his roof
Then he bought some magnanimous heroes, all fire,
Who lived but to smite and be smitten for hire

With these, on the plains like a torrent he broke,
He filled the whole country with flame and with smoke;
He killed all the swine, and he broached all the wine;
He drove off the sheep, and the beeves, and the kine;

He took castles and towns , he cut short limbs and lives ,
He made orphans and widows of children and wives
This course many years he triumphantly ran,
And did mischief enough to be called a great man

When, at last, he had gained all for which he had striven,
He bethought him of buying a passport to heaven ,
Good and great as he was, yet he did not well know
How soon, or which way, his great spirit might go

He sought the grey friars, who, beside a wild stream,
Rejected their frames on a primitive scheme ,
The gravest and wisest Gwenwynwyn found out,
All lonely and ghostly, and angling for trout

Below the white dash of a mighty cascade,
Where a pool of the stream a deep resting-place made,
And rock-rooted oaks stretched their branches on high,
The friar stood musing, and throwing his fly

To him said Gwenwynwyn, " Hold, father, here's store,
For the good of the church, and the good of the poor , " .
Then he gave him the stone , but, ere more he could speak,
Wrath came on the friar, so holy and meek

He had stretched forth his hand to receive the red gold,
And he thought himself mocked by Gwenwynwyn the Bold ,
And in scorn of the gift, and in rage at the giver,
He jerked it immediately into the river

Gwenwynwyn, aghast, not a syllable spake ,
The philosopher's stone made a duck and a drake
Two systems of circles a moment were seen,
And the stream smoothed them off, as they never had been.

Gwenwynwyn regained, and uplifted, his voice
" Oh friar, grey friar, full rash was thy choice ,
The stone, the good stone, which away thou hast thrown,
Was the stone of all stones, the philosopher's stone ! "

The friar looked pale, when his error he knew ,
The friar looked red, and the friar looked blue ,
And heels over head, from the point of a rock,
He plunged, without stopping to pull off his frock

He dived very deep, but he dived all in vain,
The prize he had slighted he found not again

Many times did the friar his diving renew,
And deeper and deeper the river still grew

Gwenwynwyn gazed long, of his senses in doubt,
To see the grey friar a diver so stout
Then sadly and slowly his castle he sought,
And left the friar diving, like dabchick distraught.

Gwenwynwyn fell sick with alarm and despite,
Died, and went to the devil, the very same night
The magnanimous heroes he held in his pay
Sacked his castle, and marched with the plunder away

No knell on the silence of midnight was rolled,
For the flight of the soul of Gwenwynwyn the Bold
The brethren, unfeared, let the mighty ghost pass,
Without praying a prayer, or intoning a mass

The friar haunted ever beside the dark stream,
The philosopher's stone was his thought and his dream
And day after day, ever head under heels
He dived all the time he could spare from his meals.

He dived, and he dived, to the end of his days,
As the peasants oft witnessed with fear and amaze
The mad friar's diving-place long was their theme,
And no plummet can fathom that pool of the stream

And still, when light clouds on the midnight winds ride,
If by moonlight you stray on the lone river-side,
The ghost of the friar may be seen diving there,
With head in the water, and heels in the air

SONG ¹

In the days of old,
Lovers felt true passion,
Deeming years of sorrow
By a smile repaid
Now the charms of gold,
Spells of pride and fashion,
Bid them say good morrow
To the best-loved maid

Through the forests wild,
O'er the mountains lonely,
They were never weary
Honour to pursue
If the damsel smiled
Once in seven years only,
All their wanderings dreary
Ample guerdon knew.

Now one day's caprice
Weighs down years of smiling,
Youthful hearts are rovers,
Love is bought and sold
Fortune's gifts may cease,
Love is less beguiling ;
Wiser were the lovers,
In the days of old

¹ [*Sung by Lady Clara de.*]

GRYLL GRANGE

[*Peacock's last novel appeared as a serial in Fraser's Magazine in 1860—the seventy-fifth year of his age.*]

WORDSWORTH'S question, in his *Poet's Epitaph*,

Art thou a man of purple cheer,
A rosy man, right plump to see ?

might have been answered in the affirmative by the Reverend Doctor Opimian. The worthy divine dwelt in an agreeably situated vicarage, on the outskirts of the New Forest. A good living, a comfortable patrimony, a moderate dowry with his wife, placed him sufficiently above the cares of the world to enable him to gratify all his tastes without minute calculations of cost. His tastes in fact were four: a good library, a good dinner, a pleasant garden, and rural walks. He was an athlete in pedestrianism. He took no pleasure in riding, either on horseback or in a carriage, but he kept a brougham for the service of Mrs. Opimian, and for his own occasional use in dining out.

Mrs. Opimian was domestic. The care of the Doctor had supplied her with the best books on cookery, to which his own inventive genius and the kindness of friends had added a large and always increasing manuscript volume. The lady studied them carefully, and by diligent superintendence left the Doctor nothing to desire in the service of his table. His cellar was well stocked with a selection of the best vintages, under his own especial charge. In all its arrangements his house was a model of

order and comfort, and the whole establishment partook of the genial physiognomy of the master. From the master and mistress to the cook, and from the cook to the tom cat, there was about the inhabitants of the vicarage a sleek and purring rotundity of face and figure that denoted community of feelings, habits, and diet, each in its kind, of course, for the Doctor had his port, the cook her ale, and the cat his milk, in sufficiently liberal allowance. In the morning, while Mrs Opimian found ample occupation in the details of her household duties and the care of her little family, the Doctor, unless he had predestined the whole day to an excursion, studied in his library. In the afternoon he walked; in the evening he dined, and after dinner read to his wife and family, or heard his children read to him. This was his home life. Now and then he dined out, more frequently than at any other place with his friend and neighbour Mr. Gryll, who entirely sympathized with him in his taste for a good dinner.

Beyond the limits of his ordinary but within those of his occasional range was a solitary round tower on an eminence backed with wood, which had probably in old days been a landmark for hunters; but having in modern days no very obvious use, was designated, as many such buildings are, by the name of the Folly. The country people called it "the Duke's Folly," though who the Duke in question was nobody could tell. Tradition had dropped his name.

One fine Midsummer day, with a southerly breeze and a cloudless sky, the Doctor, having taken an early breakfast, in the process of which he had considerably reduced the altitude of a round of beef, set out with a good stick in his hand and a Newfoundland dog at his heels for one of his longest walks, such as he could only take in the longest days.

Arriving at the Folly, which he had not visited for a long time, he was surprised to find it enclosed, and

having at the back the novelty of a covered passage, built of the same grey stone as the tower itself. This passage passed away into the wood at the back, whence was ascending a wreath of smoke which immediately recalled to him the dwelling of Circe. Indeed, the change before him had much the air of enchantment, and the Circean similitude was not a little enhanced by the antique masonry, and the expanse of sea which was visible from the eminence. He leaned over the gate, repeated aloud the lines of the *Odyssey*, and fell into a brown study, from which he was aroused by the approach of a young gentleman from within the enclosure.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said the Doctor, "but my curiosity is excited by what I see here, and if you do not think it impertinent, and would inform me how these changes have come about, I should be greatly obliged."

"Most willingly, sir," said the other; "but if you will walk in, and see what has been done, the obligation will be mine."

The Doctor readily accepted the proposal. The stranger led the way, across an open space in the wood, to a circular hall, from each side of which a wide passage led, on the left hand to the tower, and on the right to the new building, which was so masked by the wood, as not to be visible except from within the glade. It was a square structure of plain stone, much in the same style as that of the tower.

The young gentleman took the left-hand passage, and introduced the Doctor to the lower floor of the tower.

"I have divided the tower," he observed, "into three rooms one on each floor. This is the dining-room; above it is my bedroom, above it again is my library. The prospect is good from all the floors, but from the library it is most extensive, as you look over the woods far away into the open sea."

"A noble dining-room," said the Doctor. "The height is well proportioned to the diameter. That circular table well becomes the form of the room, and gives promise of a fine prospect in its way."

"I hope you will favour me by forming a practical judgment on the point," said his new acquaintance, as he led the way to the upper floor, the Doctor marvelling at the extreme courtesy with which he was treated. "This building," thought he, "might belong to the age of chivalry, and my young host might be Sir Calidore himself." But the library brought him back to other days.

The walls were covered with books, the upper portion accessible by a gallery, running entirely round the apartment. The books of the lower circle were all classical, those of the upper, English, Italian, and French, with a few volumes in Spanish.

The young gentleman took down a Homer, and pointed out to the Doctor the passage which, as he leaned over the gate, he had repeated from the *Odyssey*. This accounted to the Doctor for the deference shown to him. He saw at once into the Greek sympathy.

"You have a great collection of books," said the Doctor.

"I believe," said the young gentleman, "I have all the best books in the languages I cultivate. Horne Tooke says: 'Greek, Latin, Italian, and, French, are unfortunately the usual bounds of an English scholar's acquisition.' I think any scholar fortunate whose acquisition extends so far. These languages and our own comprise, I believe, with a few rare exceptions, all the best books in the world. I may add Spanish, for the sake of Cervantes, Lope de Vega, and Calderon. It was a *dictum* of Porson, that 'Life is too short to learn German' meaning, I apprehend, not that it is too difficult to be acquired within the ordinary space of life, but that there is

nothing in it to compensate for the portion of life bestowed on its acquirement, however little that may be." ¹

The Doctor was somewhat puzzled what to say. He had some French and more Italian, being fond of romances of chivalry, and in Greek and Latin he thought himself a match for any man, but he was more occupied with speculations on the position and character of his new acquaintance, than on the literary opinions he was enunciating. He marvelled to find a young man, rich enough to do what he here saw done, doing anything of the kind, and fitting up a library in a solitary tower, instead of passing his time in clubs and *réunions*, and other pursuits and pleasures of general society. But he thought it necessary to say something to the point, and rejoined.

"Porson was a great man, and his *dictum* would have weighed with me if I had had a velleity towards German, but I never had any. But I rather wonder you should have placed your library on the upper instead of the middle floor. The prospect, as you have observed, is fine from all the floors; but here you have the sea and the sky to the greatest advantage, and I would assign my best look-out to the hours of dressing and undressing, the first thing in the morning, the last at night, and the half-hour before dinner. You can give greater attention to the

¹ Mr Hayward's French hotel-keeper in Germany had a different, but not less cogent reason for not learning German. "Whenever a dish attracts attention by the art displayed in its conception or preparation, apart from the material, the artist will commonly be discovered to be French. Many years ago we had the curiosity to inquire, at the Hotel de France, at Dresden, to whom our party were indebted for the enjoyment they had derived from a *suprême de volaille*, and were informed the cook and the master of the hotel were one and the same person—a Frenchman, *ci-devant chef* of a Russian minister. He had been eighteen years in Germany, but knew not a word of any language but his own. "*A quoi bon, messieurs,*" was his reply to our expression of astonishment, "*à quoi bon, apprendre la langue d'un peuple qui ne possède pas une cuisine?*""—*Art of Dining*, pp. 69, 70.

views before you, when you are following operations, important certainly, but mechanical from repetition, and uninteresting in themselves, than when you are engaged in some absorbing study, which probably shuts out all perception of the external world."

"What you say is very true, sir," said the other; "but you know the lines of Milton—

Or let my lamp, at midnight hour,
Be seen in some high lonely tower,
Where I may oft outwatch the Bear,
With thrice great Hermes

"These lines have haunted me from very early days, and principally influenced me in purchasing this tower, and placing my library on the top of it. And I have another association with such a mode of life."

A French clock in the library struck two, and the young gentleman proposed to his visitor to walk into the house. They accordingly descended the stairs, and crossed the entrance-hall to a large drawing-room, simply but handsomely furnished, having some good pictures on the walls, an organ at one end of the room, a piano and harp at the other, and an elegantly disposed luncheon in the middle.

"At this time of the year," said the young gentleman, "I lunch at two, and dine at eight. This gives me two long divisions of the morning, for any in-door and out-door purposes. I hope you will partake with me. You will not find a precedent in Homer for declining the invitation."

"Really," said the Doctor, "that argument is cogent and conclusive. I accept with pleasure and indeed my long walk has given me an appetite."

"Now you must know," said the young gentleman, "I have none but female domestics. You will see my two waiting-maids."

He rang the bell, and the specified attendants

appeared : two young girls about sixteen and seventeen ; both pretty, and simply, but very becomingly, dressed.

Of the provision set before him the Doctor preferred some cold chicken and tongue Madeira and sherry were on the table, and the young attendants offered him hock and claret. The Doctor took a capacious glass from each of the fair cup-bearers, and pronounced both wines excellent, and deliciously cool. He declined more, not to over-heat himself in walking, and not to infringe on his anticipations of dinner. The dog, who had behaved throughout with exemplary propriety, was not forgotten. The Doctor rose to depart.

"I think," said his host, "I may now ask you the Homeric question—*Tis, πόθεν εἰς ἀνδρῶν*,"¹

"Most justly," said the Doctor. "My name is Theophilus Opimian. I am a Doctor of Divinity, and the incumbent of Ashbrook-cum-Ferndale."

"I am simply," said the other, "Algernon Falconer. I have inherited some money, but no land. Therefore having the opportunity, I made this purchase, to fit it up in my own fashion, and live in it in my own way."

The Doctor preparing to depart, Mr. Falconer proposed to accompany him part of the way, and calling out another Newfoundland dog, who immediately struck up a friendship with his companion, he walked away with the Doctor, the two dogs gambolling before them.

[The conversation at Gryll Grange turns upon truth in poetry]

MISS ILEX.

Truth to nature is essential to poetry. Few may perceive an inaccuracy : but to those who do, it causes a great diminution, if not a total destruction,

¹ Who, and whence, are you ?

of pleasure in perusal. Shakspeare never makes a flower blossom out of season. Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey are true to nature, in this and in all other respects : even in their wildest imaginings

THE REVEREND DOCTOR OPIMIAN.

Yet here is a combination, by one of our greatest poets, of flowers that never blossom in the same season :—

Bring the rathe primrose, that forsaken dies,
The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,
The white pink, and the pansie freakt with jet,
The glowing violet,
The musk rose, and the well-attired woodbine,
With cowslips wan, that hang the pensive head,
And every flower that sad embroidery wears
Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,
And daffadillies fill their cups with tears,
To deck the laureat hearse where Lycid lies.

And at the same time he plucks the berries of the myrtle and the ivy.

MISS ILEX.

Very beautiful, if not true to English seasons but Milton might have thought himself justified in making this combination in Arcadia. Generally he is strictly accurate, to a degree that is in itself a beauty. For instance, in his address to the nightingale :

Thee, chauntress, oft the woods among,
I woo to hear thy even-song,
And missing thee, I walk unseen,
On the dry smooth-shaven green.

The song of the nightingale ceases about the time that the grass is mown.

THE REVEREND DOCTOR OPIMIAN.

The old Greek poetry is always true to nature, and

will bear any degree of critical analysis I must say. I take no pleasure in poetry that will not

MR MACBORROWDALE.

No poet is truer to nature than Burns, and no one less so than Moore. His imagery is almost always false. Here is a highly-applauded stanza, and very taking at first sight.

The night-dew of heaven, though in silence it weeps,
Shall brighten with verdure the sod where he sleeps,
And the tear that we shed, though in secret it rolls,
Shall long keep his memory green in our souls

But it will not bear analysis. The dew is the cause of the verdure, but the tear is not the cause of the memory. the memory is the cause of the tear

. THE REVEREND DOCTOR OPIMIAN.

There are inaccuracies more offensive to me than even false imagery. Here is one, in a song which I have often heard with displeasure. A young man goes up a mountain, and as he goes higher and higher, he repeats *Excelsior* but *excelsior* is only taller in the comparison of things on a common basis, not higher as a detached object in the air. Jack's bean-stalk was *excelsior* the higher it grew. but Jack himself was no more *celsus* at the top than he had been at the bottom

MR. MACBORROWDALE.

I am afraid, Doctor, if you look for profound knowledge in popular poetry, you will often be disappointed

. THE REVEREND DOCTOR OPIMIAN.

I do not look for profound knowledge. But I do expect that poets should understand what they talk

of. Burns was not a scholar, but he was always master of his subject. All the scholarship of the world would not have produced *Tam O'Shanter* but in the whole of that poem, there is not a false image nor a misused word. What do you suppose these lines represent?

I turning saw, throned on a flowery rise,
One sitting on a crimson scarf unrolled
A queen, with swarthy cheeks and bold black eyes,
Brow-bound with burning gold.

MR. MACBORROWDALE

I should take it to be a description of the Queen of Bambo.

THE REVEREND DOCTOR OPIMIAN.

Yet thus one of our most popular poets describes Cleopatra and one of our most popular artists has illustrated the description by a portrait of a hideous grinning Æthiop. Moore led the way to this perversion by demonstrating, that the Ægyptian women must have been beautiful, because they were "the countrywomen of Cleopatra." Here we have a sort of counter-demonstration, that Cleopatra must have been a fright, because she was the countrywoman of the Ægyptians. But Cleopatra was a Greek, the daughter of Ptolemy Auletes and a lady of Pontus. The Ptolemies were Greeks, and whoever will look at their genealogy, their coins, and their medals, will see how carefully they kept their pure Greek blood uncontaminated by African intermixture. Think of this description and this picture, applied to one who, Dio says—and all antiquity confirms him—was "the most superlatively beautiful of women, splendid to see, and delightful to hear." For she was eminently accomplished she spoke many languages with grace and facility. Her mind was as wonderful as her personal beauty. There is not a shadow of intellectual expression in that horrible portrait.

LOVE AND AGE¹

I played with you 'mid cowslips blowing,
When I was six and you were four,
When garlands weaving, flower-balls throwing,
Were pleasures soon to please no more
Through groves and meads, o'er grass and heather,
With little playmates, to and fro,
We wandered hand in hand together,
But that was sixty years ago

You grew a lovely roseate maiden,
And still our early love was strong,
Still with no care our days were laden,
They glided joyously along,
And I did love you, very dearly,
How dearly words want power to show,
I thought your heart was touched as nearly,
But that was fifty years ago

Then other lovers came around you,
Your beauty grew from year to year,
And many a splendid circle found you
The centre of its glittering sphere
I saw you then, first vows forsaking,
On rank and wealth your hand bestow,
Oh, then I thought my heart was breaking,—
But that was forty years ago

And I loved on, to wed another
No cause she gave me to repine,
And when I heard you were a mother,
I did not wish the children mine
My own young flock, in fair progression,
Made up a pleasant Christmas row
My joy in them was past expression,—
But that was thirty years ago.

You grew a matron plump and comely,
You dwelt in fashion's brightest blaze,
My earthly lot was far more homely,
But I too had my festal days
No merrier eyes have ever glistened
Around the hearth-stone's wintry glow,
Than when my youngest child was christened —
But that was twenty years ago.

¹ [*A ballad sung in Gryll Grange.*]

Time passed My eldest girl was marned,
And I am now a grandsire grey,
One pet of four years old I've carried
Among the wild-flowered meads to play
In our old fields of childish pleasure,
Where now, as then, the cowslips blow,
She fills her basket's ample measure,—
And that is not ten years ago

But though first love's impassioned blindness
Has passed away in colder light,
I still have thought of you with kindness,
And shall do, till our last good-night
The ever rolling silent hours
Will bring a time we shall not know,
When our young days of gathering flowers
Will be an hundred years ago

THE FOUR AGES OF POETRY

POETRY, like the world, may be said to have four ages, but in a different order : the first age of poetry being the age of iron , the second, of gold , the third, of silver , and the fourth, of brass

The first, or iron age of poetry, is that in which rude bards celebrate in rough numbers the exploits of ruder chiefs, in days when every man is a warrior, and when the great practical maxim of every form of society, " to keep what we have and to catch what we can," is not yet disguised under names of justice and forms of law, but is the naked motto of the naked sword, which is the only judge and jury in every question of *meum* and *tuum*. In these days, the only three trades flourishing (besides that of priest which flourishes always) are those of king, thief, and beggar . the beggar being for the most part a king deject, and the thief a king expectant. The first question asked of a stranger is, whether he is a beggar or a thief ¹ the stranger, in reply, usually assumes the first, and awaits a convenient opportunity to prove his claim to the second appellation

The natural desire of every man to engross to himself as much power and property as he can acquire by any of the means which might makes right, is accompanied by the no less natural desire of making known to as many people as possible the extent to which he has been a winner in this universal game. The successful warrior becomes a chief , the successful chief becomes a king : his next want is an organ to disseminate the fame of his achievements and the extent of his possessions , and this organ he finds in a bard, who is always ready to celebrate the strength

¹ See the *Odyssey*, *passim* and *Thucydides*, I. 5.

of his arm, being first duly inspired by that of his liquor. This is the origin of poetry, which, like all other trades, takes its rise in the demand for the commodity, and flourishes in proportion to the extent of the market

Poetry is thus in its origin panegyrical. The first rude songs of all nations appear to be a sort of brief historical notices, in a strain of tumid hyperbole, of the exploits and possessions of a few pre-eminent individuals. They tell us how many battles such an one has fought, how many helmets he has cleft, how many breastplates he has pierced, how many widows he has made, how much land he has appropriated, how many houses he has demolished for other people, what a large one he has built for himself, how much gold he has stowed away in it, and how liberally and plentifully he pays, feeds, and intoxicates the divine and immortal bards, the sons of Jupiter, but for whose everlasting songs the names of heroes would perish

This is the first stage of poetry before the invention of written letters. The numerical modulation is at once useful as a help to memory, and pleasant to the ears of uncultured men, who are easily caught by sound: and from the exceeding flexibility of the yet unformed language, the poet does no violence to his ideas in subjecting them to the fetters of number. The savage indeed lisps in numbers, and all rude and uncivilized people express themselves in the manner which we call poetical.

The scenery by which he is surrounded, and the superstitions which are the creed of his age, form the poet's mind. Rocks, mountains, seas, unsubdued forests, unnavigable rivers, surround him with forms of power and mystery, which ignorance and fear have peopled with spirits, under multifarious names of gods, goddesses, nymphs, geni, and dæmons. Of all these personages marvellous tales are in existence:

the nymphs are not indifferent to handsome young men, and the gentlemen-genu are much troubled and very troublesome with a propensity to be rude to pretty maidens. the bard therefore finds no difficulty in tracing the genealogy of his chief to any of the deities in his neighbourhood with whom the said chief may be most desirous of claiming relationship.

In this pursuit, as in all others, some of course will attain a very marked pre-eminence, and these will be held in high honour, like Demodocus in the Odyssey, and will be consequently inflated with boundless vanity, like Thamyras in the Iliad. Poets are as yet the only historians and chroniclers of their time, and the sole depositories of all the knowledge of their age, and though this knowledge is rather a crude congeries of traditional phantasies than a collection of useful truths, yet, such as it is, they have it to themselves. They are observing and thinking, while others are robbing and fighting. and though their object be nothing more than to secure a share of the 'spoil, yet they accomplish this end by intellectual, not by physical, power. their success excites emulation to the attainment of intellectual eminence. thus they sharpen their own wits and awaken those of others, at the same time that they gratify vanity and amuse curiosity. A skilful display of the little knowledge they have gains them credit for the possession of much more which they have not. Their familiarity with the secret history of gods and genu obtains for them, without much difficulty, the reputation of inspiration, thus they are not only historians but theologians, moralists, and legislators: delivering their oracles *ex cathedrâ*, and being indeed often themselves (as Orpheus and Amphion) regarded as portions and emanations of divinity: building cities with a song, and leading brutes with a symphony; which are only metaphors for the faculty of leading multitudes by the nose.

[After the iron age of poetry, Peacock traces in classical literature a golden or Homeric age, when poetry begins to be retrospective, and to magnify the ancient heroes through the mists of distance and tradition. Character is still various and strong, nature unsubdued and magnificent, and poetry—now in its perfection—an art without rival in any other department of literature. Then comes the silver age, or the poetry of civilized life, a poetry characterized, as in Virgil and Horace, “by an exquisite and fastidious selection of words, and a laboured and somewhat monotonous harmony of expression.” It is followed by “the age of brass, which, by rejecting the polish and the learning of the age of silver, and taking a retrograde step to the barbarisms and crude traditions of the age of iron, professes to return to nature and revive the age of gold. This is the second childhood of poetry. . . . To this age may be referred all the poets who flourished in the decline of the Roman Empire”]

Modern poetry has also its four ages, but “it wears its rue with a difference.”

To the age of brass in the ancient world succeeded the dark ages, in which the light of the Gospel began to spread over Europe, and in which, by a mysterious and inscrutable dispensation, the darkness thickened with the progress of the light. The tribes that overran the Roman Empire brought back the days of barbarism, but with this difference, that there were many books in the world, many places in which they were preserved, and occasionally some one by whom they were read, who indeed (if he escaped being burned *pour l'amour de Dieu*,) generally lived an object of mysterious fear, with the reputation of magician, alchymist, and astrologer. The emerging of the nations of Europe from this superinduced barbarism, and their settling into new forms of polity, was accompanied, as the first ages of Greece had been,

with a wild spirit of adventure, which, co-operating with new manners and new superstitions, raised up a fresh crop of chimæras, not less fruitful, though far less beautiful, than those of Greece. The semi-deification of women by the maxims of the age of chivalry, combining with these new fables, produced the romance of the middle ages. The founders of the new line of heroes took the place of the demi-gods of Grecian poetry. Charlemagne and his Paladins, Arthur and his knights of the round table, the heroes of the iron age of chivalrous poetry, were seen through the same magnifying mist of distance, and their exploits were celebrated with even more extravagant hyperbole. These legends, combined with the exaggerated love that pervades the songs of the troubadours, the reputation of magic that attached to learned men, the infant wonders of natural philosophy, the crazy fanaticism of the crusades, the power and privileges of the great feudal chiefs, and the holy mysteries of monks and nuns, formed a state of society in which no two laymen could meet without fighting, and in which the three staple ingredients of lover, prize-fighter, and fanatic, that composed the basis of the character of every true man, were mixed up and diversified, in different individuals and classes, with so many distinctive excellencies, and under such an infinite motley variety of costume, as gave the range of a most extensive and picturesque field to the two great constituents of poetry, love and battle.

From these ingredients of the iron age of modern poetry, dispersed in the rhymes of minstrels and the songs of the troubadours, arose the golden age, in which the scattered materials were harmonized and blended about the time of the revival of learning, but with this peculiar difference, that Greek and Roman literature pervaded all the poetry of the golden age of modern poetry, and hence resulted a

heterogeneous compound of all ages and nations in one picture ; an infinite licence, which gave to the poet the free range of the whole field of imagination and memory. This was carried very far by Ariosto, but farthest of all by Shakespeare and his contemporaries, who used time and locality merely because they could not do without them, because every action must have its when and where . but they made no scruple of deposing a Roman Emperor by an Italian Count, and sending him off in the disguise of a French pilgrim to be shot with a blunderbuss by an English archer This makes the old English drama very picturesque, at any rate, in the variety of costume, and very diversified in action and character , though it is a picture of nothing that ever was seen on earth except a Venetian carnival

The greatest of English poets, Milton, may be said to stand alone between the ages of gold and silver, combining the excellencies of both ; for with all the energy, and power, and freshness of the first, he united all the studied and elaborate magnificence of the second

The silver age succeeded , beginning with Dryden, coming to perfection with Pope, and ending with Goldsmith, Collins, and Gray

Cowper divested verse of its exquisite polish ; he thought in metre, but paid more attention to his thoughts than his verse. It would be difficult to draw the boundary of prose and blank verse between his letters and his poetry.

The silver age was the reign of authority ; but authority now began to be shaken, not only in poetry but in the whole sphere of its dominion. The contemporaries of Gray and Cowper were deep and elaborate thinkers. The subtle scepticism of Hume, the solemn irony of Gibbon, the daring paradoxes of Rousseau, and the biting ridicule of Voltaire, directed the energies of four extraordinary minds to shake

every portion of the reign of authority. Enquiry was roused, the activity of intellect was excited, and poetry came in for its share of the general result. The changes had been rung on lovely maid and sylvan shade, summer heat and green retreat, waving trees and sighing breeze, gentle swains and amorous pains, by versifiers who took them on trust, as meaning something very soft and tender, without much caring what : but with this general activity of intellect came a necessity for even poets to appear to know something of what they professed to talk of. Thomson and Cowper looked at the trees and hills which so many ingenious gentlemen had rhymed about so long without looking at them at all, and the effect of the operation on poetry was like the discovery of a new world. Painting shared the influence, and the principles of picturesque beauty were explored by adventurous essayists with indefatigable pertinacity. The success which attended these experiments, and the pleasure which resulted from them, had the usual effect of all new enthusiasms, that of turning the heads of a few unfortunate persons, the patriarchs of the age of brass, who, mistaking the prominent novelty for the all-important totality, seem to have ratiocinated much in the following manner : "Poetical genius is the finest of all things, and we feel that we have more of it than any one ever had. The way to bring it to perfection is to cultivate poetical impressions exclusively. Poetical impressions can be received only among natural scenes : for all that is artificial is anti-poetical. Society is artificial, therefore we will live out of society. The mountains are natural, therefore we will live in the mountains. There we shall be shining models of purity and virtue, passing the whole day in the innocent and amiable occupation of going up and down hill, receiving poetical impressions, and communicating them in immortal verse to admiring

generations " To some such perversion of intellect we owe that egregious confraternity of rhymesters, known by the name of the Lake Poets , who certainly did receive and communicate to the world some of the most extraordinary poetical impressions that ever were heard of, and ripened into models of public virtue, too splendid to need illustration They wrote verses on a new principle ; saw rocks and rivers in a new light , and remaining studiously ignorant of history, society, and human nature, cultivated the phantasy only at the expence of the memory and the reason , and contrived, though they had retreated from the world for the express purpose of seeing nature as she was, to see her only as she was not, converting the land they lived in into a sort of fairy-land, which they peopled with mysticisms and chimæras. This gave what is called a new tone to poetry, and conjured up a herd of desperate imitators, who have brought the age of brass prematurely to its dotage

The descriptive poetry of the present day has been called by its cultivators a return to nature Nothing is more unpertinent than this pretension. Poetry cannot travel out of the regions of its birth, the uncultivated lands of semi-civilized men Mr Wordsworth, the great leader of the returners to nature, cannot describe a scene under his own eyes without putting into it the shadow of a Danish boy or the living ghost of Lucy Gray, or some similar phantastical parturition of the moods of his own mind.

In the origin and perfection of poetry, all the associations of life were composed of poetical materials With us it is decidedly the reverse We know too that there are no Dryads in Hyde-park nor Naiads in the Regent's-canal But barbaric manners and supernatural interventions are essential to poetry. Either in the scene, or in the time, or

in both, it must be remote from our ordinary perceptions. While the historian and the philosopher are advancing in, and accelerating, the progress of knowledge, the poet is wallowing in the rubbish of departed ignorance, and raking up the ashes of dead savages to find gewgaws and rattles for the grown babies of the age. Mr. Scott digs up the poachers and cattle-stealers of the ancient border Lord Byron cruizes for thieves and pirates on the shores of the Morea and among the Greek Islands. Mr. Southey wades through ponderous volumes of travels and old chronicles, from which he carefully selects all that is false, useless, and absurd, as being essentially poetical, and when he has a commonplace book full of monstrosities, strings them into an epic Mr. Wordsworth picks up village legends from old women and sextons, and Mr Coleridge, to the valuable information acquired from similar sources, superadds the dreams of crazy theologians and the mysticisms of German metaphysics, and favours the world with visions in verse, in which the quadruple elements of sexton, old woman, Jeremy Taylor, and Emanuel Kant, are harmonized into a delicious poetical compound. Mr Moore presents us with a Persian, and Mr. Campbell with a Pennsylvanian tale, both formed on the same principle as Mr. Southey's epics, by extracting from a perfunctory and desultory perusal of a collection of voyages and travels, all that useful investigation would not seek for and that common sense would reject.

These disjointed relics of tradition and fragments of second-hand observation, being woven into a tissue of verse, constructed on what Mr. Coleridge calls a new principle (that is, no principle at all), compose a modern-antique compound of frippery and barbarism, in which the puling sentimentality of the present time is grafted on the misrepresented ruggedness of the past into a heterogeneous congeries of

unamalgamating manners, sufficient to impose on the common readers of poetry, over whose understandings the poet of this class possesses that commanding advantage, which, in all circumstances and conditions of life, a man who knows something, however little, always possesses over one who knows nothing.

ELLEN

The marble tomb, in sculptur'd state display'd,
Decks the vile earth where wealthy vice is laid ,
But no vain pomp its hollow splendor throws,
Where Beauty, Virtue, Innocence, repose
The cypress tow'rs, the waving willows weep,
Where Ellen sleeps the everlasting sleep,
Where with a sigh the passing stranger sees
The long rank grave-grass bending in the breeze.

I DUG, BENEATH THE CYPRESS SHADE

I dug, beneath the cypress shade,
What well might seem an elfin's grave ,
And every pledge in earth I laid,
That erst thy false affection gave.

I pressed them down the sod beneath ,
I placed one mossy stone above ,
And twined the rose's fading wreath
Around the sepulchre of love.

Frail as thy love, the flowers were dead,
Ere yet the evening sun was set
But years shall see the cypress spread,
Immutable as my regret

AL MIO PRIMIERO AMORE

To many a shrine my steps have strayed,
Ne'er from their earliest fetters free
And I have sighed to many a maid,
Though I have never loved but thee

Youth's visioned scenes, too bright to last,
Have vanished to return no more
Yet memory loves to trace the past,
Which only memory can restore

The confidence, no heart has felt
But when with first illusions warm,
The hope, on one alone that dwelt,
The thought, that knew no second form,—

All these were ours and can it be
That their return may charm us yet ?
Can aught remain to thee and me,
Beyond remembrance and regret ?

For now thy sweetest smiles appear
Like shades of joys for ever flown,
As music in an exile's ear
Recalls the strains his home has known.

No more can bloom the faded flower ·
No more the extinguished fire can burn :
Nor hope nor fancy's mightiest power
Can burst young love's sepulchral urn.

NEWARK ABBEY

August, 1842 With a Reminiscence of August, 1807

I gaze, where August's sunbeam falls
Along these gray and lonely walls,
Till in its light absorbed appears
The lapse of five-and-thirty years

If change there be, I trace it not
In all this consecrated spot
No new imprint of Ruin's march
On roofless wall and frameless arch
The hills, the woods, the fields, the stream,
Are basking in the self-same beam
The fall, that turns the unseen mill,
As then it murmured, murmurs still.
It seems, as if in one were cast
The present and the imaged past,
Spanning, as with a bridge sublime,
That awful lapse of human time,
That gulph, unfathomably spread
Between the living and the dead

For all too well my spirit feels
The only change this scene reveals.
The sunbeams play, the breezes stir,
Unseen, unfelt, unheard by her,
Who, on that long-past August day,
First saw with me these ruins gray

Whatever span the Fates allow,
Ere I shall be as she is now,
Still in my bosom's inmost coil
Shall that deep-treasured memory dwell
That, more than language can express,
Pure miracle of loveliness,
Whose voice so sweet, whose eyes so bright,
Were my soul's music and its light,
In those blest days, when life was new,
And hope was false, but love was true

THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

MARGARET LOVE PEACOCK

Born March 23rd 1823

Died January 13th 1826

Long night succeeds thy little day ;
Oh blighted blossom, can it be,
That this grey stone and grassy clay
Have closed our anxious care of thee ?

The half-formed words of liveliest thought,
That spoke a mind beyond thy years,
The song, the dance, by nature taught,
The sunny smiles, the transient tears,

The symmetry of face and form,
The eye with light and life replete,
The little heart, so fondly warm,
The voice so musically sweet ,

These, lost to hope, in memory yet
Around the hearts that loved thee cling,
Shadowing with long and vain regret
The too fair promise of thy spring.

Lines on the Death of Julia,
Lord Broughton's Eldest Daughter, 1849

Accept, bright Spirit, reft in life's best bloom,
Thus votive wreath to thy untimely tomb,
Formed to adorn all scenes, and charm in all,
The fire-side circle and the courtly hall,
Thy friends to gladden, and thy home to bless,
Fair form thou hadst, and grace, and graciousness;
A mind that sought, a tongue that spoke, the truth,
And thought matured beneath the smile of youth
Dear, dear young friend, ingenuous, cordial heart!
And can it be that thou shouldst first depart?
That age should sorrow o'er thy youthful shrine?
It owns more near, more sacred griefs, than mine,
Yet, 'midst the many who thy loss deplore,
Few loved thee better, and few mourn thee more.

CASTLES IN THE AIR

My thoughts by night are often filled
With visions false as fair.
For in the past alone I build
My castles in the air.

I dwell not now on what may be.
Night shadows o'er the scene
But still my fancy wanders free
Though that which might have been.

NOTES

The references are to page and line

- 2 29 The "learned friend" .
Lord Brougham See note to
p 161, l 16
- 5 9 *μειζονος* *τινος*: and of
an other greater one
- 14 22 *dies nefastus*: unlucky
day
- 17 15 The deteriorationist . Mr
Escot "is always looking
into the dark side of the
question", and believes that
the world is deteriorating
- 19.15 *cwrw* . alc
- 25 27 Lord C. . Castlereagh
- 38 2 *Scythrop* *σκυθρωπος*, of a
peevish or sullen countenance.
- 38 21 *random* . in driving ran-
dem (or random) three horses
are harnessed tandem
- 42 34 God save King Richard
see Shakespeare, *King
Richard III*, III v 21-43
- 43 4 the drum ecclesiastic .
Butler's *Hudibras* I i 11-12
And Pulpit, Drum Eccles-
iastick,
• Was beat with Fist, instead
• of a Stick
- 43 8 the Manichæan Millen-
arian . Manichæism was a
religious system, widely ac-
cepted from the third to the
sixth century, with a dualistic
theology representing Satan
as co-eternal with God . A
Millenarian believes that
Christ will reign on earth in
person for a thousand years
- 44 22 "his cogitative . .
cogitation": Henry Carey,
Chrononkolonihologos, II 59-
60
- 44 29 the Sorrows of Werter .
see note to p 70, l 20
- 45.17 Horrid Mysteries: the
title of an extravagant rom-
ance published in 1796
- 51 4 "Zitti . confusione":
from the opera *Il Barbiere
di Siviglia*, by Rossini See
p 68, l 22
- 51 32 *Nina . . . amore . Nina*,
o la Pazza d'Amore is an
opera by Paisiello
- 54 9 *Don Giovanni*: by Mozart,
one of Peacock's favourite
operas
- 61 25 "Certainly . . at":
Shakespeare, *Henry V*, III.
v 1 55
- 62 25 representatives: *ie* of
noble families
- 62 29 The false knave . . .
request Shakespeare, *Henry
IV*, Part 2, V 1 47-57
- 64 5 a Rosicrucian: the Rosi-
crucians were a society said
to have been founded in the
late fifteenth century . They
claimed power over the ele-
ments and elemental spirits
- 61 16 *Zeuxis* of Heraclea,
one of the most famous
painters of ancient Greece.
For his masterpiece, the
picture of Helen painted for
the city of Crotona, he was
allowed to choose the five
most beautiful virgins of that
city as models
- 65 25 The Norfolk Tragedy:
the Babes in the Wood
- 69 1 *sedet . . . sedebit* ? Virgil,
Aeneid VI, 617
- 70 20 Werter: in the 93rd
letter of Goethe's *Sorrows of
Werter*, the hero takes leave
of his friends before commit-
ting suicide for the love of
Charlotte . After writing it,

- he set his papers in order, and "at ten o'clock he ordered his fire to be made up and a pint of wine to be brought. He then dismissed his servant" Peacock was out of sympathy with Werter, whom he called (in *The Four Ages of Poetry*) "a puling driveller." See also p 44, l 29.
- 71 33. **The Great Mogul:** Scythrop had told his father that he was composing a tragedy on the Great Mogul in exile at Kensington
- 78 23 **segue subito:** continue suddenly
appoggiatura con fuoco: leaning with ardour
- 80 15. **stand . . . going:** Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, III iv, 119.
- 82.20 **hasta:** enough.
- 82 38 **lex talionis:** the law of retaliation—tit for tat
- 95 27. **Vert:** the green vegetation of a forest, that gave cover to the deer, and was in the charge of their keepers
- 100 15 in **terrorem:** as a warning
- 104 37 **participes criminis:** sharers in the offence
- 106 3 **angels gold coins**(angel-nobles) first struck by Edward IV. They bore a device of the archangel Michael piercing the dragon.
- 108 5 **a coranto:** a lively dance tune
- 110 5. **antipodagron:** remedy against gout
- 125 36 **Anenrin:** a Welsh bard of the early seventh century
- 135 2 **his first experiment:** the wind had blown him down when he first came out on to the embankment.
- 156 18. **Roncesvalles:** where,
- according to the *Chanson de Roland*, Roland and Oliver were slain by the Saracens
- 160 21 **dyslogistic:** opprobrious, defamatory
- 161 15-16. **Steam Intellect Society . . . learned friend:** see note to p 2, l 29 Lord Brougham (the "Lord Facing both-ways" of *Gryll Grange*), whom Peacock cordially detested, had founded the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge in 1825
- 162 1 **demulced:** mollified, made gentle
- 162 4 **Frère Jean des Entommeures:** one of Rabelais' characters, "Friar John of the funnels and goblets," to whom Peacock is considerably indebted in his portrait of Friar Michael
- 180 11. **Sir Calidore:** the knight of courtesy, hero of the Sixth Book of the *Faerie Queene*
- 182 11 **Or let . . . Hermes:** *Il Penseroso*, ll 85-8
- 184.18 **Bring . . . Lycid lies:** *Lycidas*, ll 142-151
- 184 27-30 **Thee . . . green:** *Il Penseroso*, ll 63-6
- 185.8-11. **The night-dew . . . souls:** the second, and final, stanza of one of Moore's *Irish Melodies*, "Oh 'breathe not his name" The first two lines are misquoted, and should run
 But the night-dew that falls, though in silence it weeps,
 Shall brighten with verdure the grave where he sleeps,
- 185 17 **a song** by Longfellow
- 186 7-10 **I turning . . . gold:** Tennyson, *A Dream of Fair Women*, stanza 32

